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THE VALLEY PATRIOT

'Weather 101' with Al Kaprielian

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The Massachusetts House of Representatives unanimously voted for a new public records reform bill. The bill now heads to the Senate. What does the bill actually say?

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VALLEY PATRIOT OF THE MONTH

GRANDPA'S AQUARIUM - A CHRISTMAS STORY BY JIM CASSIDY

Jim Cassidy
DECEMBER, 2004

Commander Jim Cassidy was a regular columnist for the Valley Patriot from our very first edition in 2004 until shortly before he passed away in 2011. Cassidy was a WWII veteran, received the Bronze Star, was commander of the American Legion POST 219, and a charter member

of the North Andover Taxpayers' Association as well as a member of the North Andover Council on Aging. In 2004, our first year of publishing, Jim penned this Christmas story for us, which has turned out to be classic, most requested story by our readers. Here for your continued enjoyment, is Grandpa's Aquarium. **Part II of our series on Thomas Kattar will resume in January. ***



Late at night, as I gaze out the front window, with the snow softly falling and the holiday lights starting to appear on the surrounding houses, my thoughts often drift back to former times when we were much younger and Christmas was — and still is — a special and magical time for youngsters. My brother Billy and I grew up in Worcester, at the top of a high hill in what we called "the Big House".

Seen through our six and eight year-old eyes, it was a big magical place, filled with grandpa's great inventions and gimmicks! It actually was the typical three-decker house of it's day, overlooking Holy Cross College and situated in the midst of everything we needed — schools, church, shops and a textile company offering work.

My mom and dad, along with Billy and myself, lived on the first floor, with Grandpa, Nana and assorted uncles, aunts and cousins occupying the second and third floors and one small cottage in the rear. The property also had a large two-story barn to store Grandpa's treasures, and various sheds for "other stuff". The barn was of course the focal point for all family and friend's activities in the neighborhood. Grandpa worked twelve hours a day in the foundry (along with his five sons) as a molderer near the blast furnace, but still had time to become a self-made scientist and artisan working in astronomy, photography and wood-working.

Christmas Eve was special at the Big House. We boys were shooed off early

to bed and told to go to sleep. Then the magical creations took place as we boys burrowed deeper under the covers trying to ignore all of the whispered activities outside our bedroom door.

The traditional 14-foot blue spruce Christmas tree, bundled and stored on the large wrap-around porch, was brought in and decorated along with the entire house. Gaily wrapped presents and toys were brought out from secret hiding places and the Lionel electric train was set up ready to be running at dawn! But always — the greatest, grandest and most stunning sight on Christmas morning was — GRANDPA'S AQUARIUM!

In the sun room, so named due to it's many windows, sat the focal point of the house, a 250 gallon glass aquarium. One of grandpa's many building feats, the huge octagonal-shaped tank had a concrete centerpiece created as a four-faced gargoyle, with four gaping mouths allowing fish to swim freely through the statue. Grandpa's plumbing allowed a fountain of fresh water to enter and come out from the gargoyle's heads and to eventually drain out through doors to water the grass and flowers. The bottom of the tank contained sand and hundreds of beach shells and rocks of various colors and hues. A movable lighting system was attached to the sides.

Overlooking the sun room was a large and beautiful colored talking parrot, named of course Polly, who resided in a gilded cage in the corner of the room.

AQUARIUM: PAGE: 31

Solving For “X”

Jeff Katz
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

I have been privileged over the years to meet many notable folks including celebrities from the entertainment world, athletes and elected officials. One man I met about seventeen years ago however, touched me in a different way. He was not a professional athlete, but he had a passion for baseball. He did not play at Fenway Park, but he did give tours of the place. He was not a politician, but he had a love for current events and enjoyed talking about all of the issues of the day. He was not an entertainer, but I found him to be quite entertaining.

His name was Tom Jaillet and for more than fifty years he was a schoolteacher. No, I never had the chance to sit in one of his classes but I certainly did learn a lot from him. I met him when his daughter brought me home for Thanksgiving dinner. He had just met me, but Tom welcomed me like he had known me forever. Good thing too, because I would wind up as his son in law!

I can remember one of my first chats with Tom where we were talking about our respective professions. He knew me from the radio and I recoiled in mock horror when he told me that he was a math teacher. I broke the news, as gently as I could, that I had never been able to “solve for X” and I hoped that would not be a problem. He laughed. “X” is a mystery he said, but the answer is always there.

I feel blessed to have had Tom in my life for these past seventeen years. I always knew him to be a decent, honorable and hardworking man with a love of life and the appreciation for a good joke. I also loved his bartending skills. Nobody made

a chunky Bloody Mary like he did and I’ll miss that. You see, Tom died a few weeks ago.

A couple months ago, you would have found my father-in-law on the golf course or sitting on the deck enjoying a beer. He had just retired and was making plans to take a cooking class, travel, and spend more time with his grandchildren. My favorite memories of him were watching him with his grandchildren. His beaming ear-to-ear smile showed everyone just how he felt about them.

Tom’s funeral took place at Tabor Academy in Marion, MA. A fitting location since he spent more than a half-century teaching there. The chapel was packed, which was a meaningful tribute to such a well-respected faculty member. The most touching part came as we learned that many of his former students had flown in from around the country to pay their final respects to Mr. Jaillet.

I still don’t know exactly how to solve for “X” but I’m thinking that the lessons from Tom’s life might point me in the right direction. Live your life with a sense of dignity and purpose. Look out for others. Enjoy simple pleasures. Do the right thing. Laugh. Make that chunky Bloody Mary exactly the way your daughter and her husband like it, even though you think it has too much horseradish. Smile.

If you are so inclined and would like to honor the memory of one of the best men I’ve ever known, please make a donation in Tom Jaillet’s name to the Friends of the Northshore Education Consortium, 112 Sohier Road, Beverly, MA 01915 or online at <https://www.nsedu.org/ways-to-give/a-gift/>



“WEATHER 101” WITH AL!

Meteorological Winter

Al Kaprielian
VALLEY PATRIOT WEATHERMAN

We are now in meteorological winter, which began on December 1st and runs through February 28, 2016. December, January and February are considered meteorological winter.

Most of November saw temperatures above normal. This past November will rank as the ninth warmest November for Boston since weather records began in 1872.

Why was it so warm in November?

One reason was the upper level subtropical HIGH PRESSURE system off the east coast. This high pressure was quite strong and pushed the jet stream to our north and west. Remember, the jet stream is made up of winds 20 to 40 thousand feet above the ground. The jet stream separates cold air north and west of its track, and much warmer air south and east of its track. This subtropical high pressure system caused our temps to be warmer than normal for November.

Another reason is El Nino, which occurs every 2 to 7 years.

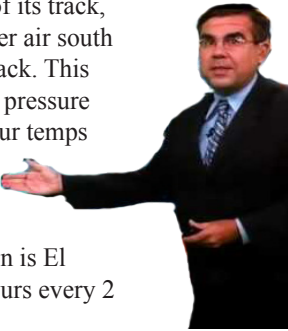
El Nino occurs when the South Pacific

Ocean is warmer than normal. El Nino can affect the track of the jet stream. Usually, an upper level trough which brings stormy weather over the western US and parts of the central US occurs with El Nino. Along the east coast, El Nino can cause more ridging high pressure in the upper atmosphere. During this past November, we have seen this with snow over the western US and Rocky Mountains, and even an ice storm (freezing rain) over the Texas panhandle and Oklahoma and Kansas.

As we now move into December, we are not seeing the northern and southern jet streams phase to bring us a big storm. The two jet streams have to phase to give us a big storm. With winter ahead of us, we can expect the two jet streams to eventually phase.

Also, we have to watch for the formation of the high pressure system in Greenland. When this occurs, the jet stream is blocked by this high pressure system and stays to our south. In this situation we can get very cold air and snowstorms. Its difficult to say when this this weather pattern will develop. With winter on the way, you should try and listen to the weather each day because the computer models can change what they are predicting from day to day.

I’m meteorologist Al Kaprielian with your EXCLUSIVE Valley Patriot weather information. See you next month!



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Recall Against Mayor Rivera Must Fail

In November of 2013, (then) Lawrence City Councilor Dan Rivera defeated incumbent Mayor Willie Lantigua by 84 votes. After a recount was conducted, and Rivera was again declared the winner, Mayor Lantigua told The Valley Patriot that he would be coming back to run against Rep. Marcos Devers and then, working full time to recall Dan Rivera so he could assume his rightful spot in the mayor's office.

While most dismissed the Lantigua comeback story, (some even laughed) we here at The Valley Patriot continued to ring the alarm bells that Lantigua was pulling the strings of Council President Maldonado (and the majority of the city council), in an effort to return as Lawrence's mayor.

And when the recall was officially announced this year by a group of Lantigua leftovers, we sounded the alarm bells again that Lantigua was the force behind it as a veiled effort for his return. We also tried to warn Mayor River and the public that this recall had legs, and should be taken seriously. Yet, no matter how many times we were right, most, including Mayor Rivera and his supporters, dismissed our warnings, waiting far too long to take the threat seriously enough to fight back.

Now, the Eagle-Tribune, the mayor, and others are finally waking up. Sadly, it may be too late. Lantigua has gained great momentum among his racist and corrupt followers.

But, Lantigua has not only spearheaded and organized the recall to throw Rivera out of office, he has organized TWO recalls, the second being a backup in case Rivera gets the petitions thrown out during a legal technicality. This is bad news for Rivera, for Lawrence, and the state taxpayers footing the bill for all of this silliness.

The purpose of recall elections are, and should be reserved for throwing elected officials out of office for criminal behavior, incompetence, or when the office holder cannot, or will not do the job they were elected to do.

This is not the case with Mayor Rivera. The recall process in Lawrence has been used as a tool of political retribution by the losers of an election to undo the will of the people during a democratic election.

Since the Lawrence charter went into affect in 1986, recall efforts have been used to try and nullify the elections of Mayors Kennedy, Dowling, Michael Sullivan, and even Lantigua himself. All of those recall efforts failed.

But, this recall is different. This recall has a political genius, and thousands of rabid supporters desperate to achieve power once again, so they can fleece the taxpayers and settle political scores.

We strongly condemn the recall effort by Willie Lantigua and his supporters to throw Lawrence Mayor Dan Rivera out of office.

He was duely elected as mayor in 2013, and if the Lantigua supporters do not like that, their ringleader is free to run again in 2017 to try to regain his seat.

We do not agree with much of Rivera's political agenda for Lawrence. He has been wrong many times in his first two years on some very serious issues; trying to farm out 911 dispatching services, micromanaging the police department, getting rid of the Trauma Intervention Team to save money, trying to move the registry downtown are just a few examples.

But, despite our differences, we do not see even one single reason Rivera should be forcibly removed from office.

At the risk of making our largest advertiser (Laborer's Union, Local 175) angry with us, we believe that the recall against Lawrence Mayor Dan Rivera must be stopped at all costs. Lawrence cannot go back to federal grand juries, stolen trash trucks, incompetent city workers, corrupt lawyers milking the taxpayers, and criminals working out of Lawrence City Hall.

We only wish people had heeded the warning of our publisher two years ago and had done something to stop it before now.

Lawmakers Pass Public Records Reform

Bill Moves To State Senate ~ What The Bill REALLY Says

Maria Fiato
VALLEY PATRIOT STAFF

After nearly five years of trying to get the Massachusetts legislature to reform the state's impotent public records law, Valley Patriot publisher Tom Duggan says that they have made a good first step towards holding public officials accountable for not turning over public documents.

Last week, the Massachusetts House of Representatives unanimously passed House Bill 3858 (1) the House version of Senate Bill S1700.

If passed by the Senate and signed by the governor, the new law would limit the amount of money that can be charged for documents, expands the time frame for officials to turn over records, and allows court costs and legal fees to those who are forced to sue a city or public agency to get access to public records. The new law will also allow for punitive damages if an official or agency is found to be purposely concealing public records.

MAKE PUBLIC OFFICIALS PAY THE FINES? NOT SO FAST!

Missing from the final bill passed last week, however, was what Duggan called the most important sentence he wrote.

"They took out language that says public officials get fined \$50 a day, out of pocket, for every day they refuse to turn over public records. That's because the Mass Municipal Association, the very people who will be paying the fines, lobbied Beacon Hill. That language has to be put back in the bill when the Senate takes



it up at the beginning of the year."

The public records reform bill's legislative sponsor, Diana DiZoglio said that penalties are the key to making sure this law is enforced fairly and evenly.

"If citizens are not able to gain access to public documents, we cannot claim that there is transparency in government. If we don't have some kind of penalty, there is no enforcement, and people are not going to comply ... this is what I ran on, public accountability [and] transparency in government. This definitely has to be done."

Co-sponsor of the House version of the bill, State Representative Linda Dean Campbell (D- METHUEN) said that the bill was good legislation, adding, "It's not perfect. In government you have to compromise. The other side is unhappy with some of the language, and your side [The Valley Patriot] is unhappy about some of the language. As a whole though, Chairman Dempsey did a great job making this a balanced bill. I think it's a going to be a good law when the governor signs it."

Senator Kathleen O'Connor Ives said that the proposed penalties taken out of the bill would have "incentivized timely compliance with reasonable public records requests and encouraged increased government transparency and accountability."

THE CURRENT LAW

The state's 40-year-old public records law (MGL Ch. 66) was written in the wake of Watergate in an attempt to fool the public into believing the Massachusetts legislature was forcing government transparency.

"It was a great deception and it worked for forty years," Duggan said, "but the free ride is over."

The current law requires that government officials turn over public documents within ten days. But the law has never been uniformly enforced because there is no penalty for those who violate it.

THE RUNAROUND

Most government officials go out of their way to turn over public records upon request. Others, however, concerned with being cast in a bad public light, (or that documents will expose wrongdoing by their agency or town) have gone out of their way to conceal those records.

"We submitted a public records request from (then) North Andover Superintendent Hottle. We were investigating reports that



Valley Patriot Publisher Tom Duggan, author of the public records reform bill, and State Representative Diana DiZoglio, the bill's sponsor in the house.

the School Committee Chairman had used school computers to campaign for a meals-tax vote at Annual Town Meeting. All we wanted were her emails. He could have forwarded them to me at no cost. Instead, he sent me a bill for thousands of dollars, hoping I would prefer not to spend so much on the story," Duggan said.

After several one-on-one meetings with Duggan, Hottle eventually turned over the emails at no cost.

"This is what some of our government officials have been getting away with under the current law," Duggan continued.

"Especially when they have something to hide. They jack up the price of producing documents to make it prohibitive, and in some cases impossible to obtain. Or, they tell naïve citizens that the documents they requested are not considered public records. Or, they drag their feet and claim the records don't exist. Or worse, like with the City of Lawrence, they charge you money for the documents, cash your check, and then never give you the records you requested. What the hell. If there's no penalty for violating a law, you can come up with all kinds of excuses for not following it."

Duggan testified with Representative DiZoglio at a joint House and Senate Committee, where they both begged legislators not to remove the language holding officials personally accountable with stiff fines. The subcommittee voted for the bill unanimously and merged it with other pieces of legislation, creating a multi-



faceted reform package.

GETTING THE LAW CHANGED

In 2011 & 2012, The Valley Patriot sued the City of Lawrence and won several judgments after (then) Mayor Lantigua refused to release public records. Lantigua admitted, "Because no money comes out of my pocket, you will never get those records as long as I am mayor."

The Valley Patriot incurred nearly \$11,000 in legal bills fighting Lantigua in Superior Court. But, when three years of court battles were over, Judge Cornetta shrugged his shoulders and said there was nothing he could do. Cornetta (2) said in open court that he would like to fine the city for refusing his multiple court orders, but there was no provision in the law allowing him to do so.

Duggan first submitted language for a public records reform bill with Andover Rep. Jim Lyons, but the Lyons bill was sent to a subcommittee where it died a very quick death.

The following year, Lyons submitted the same language, but Duggan enlisted the help of Rep. DiZoglio and Senator Ives. After getting voted out of three committees with a favorable recommendation, the bill died again when the legislature adjourned for the year without voting on the bill.

Last year, Senator Ives resubmitted the bill, as did Rep. DiZoglio in the house. More than three years after first being submitted, the legislature finally voted on

PUBLIC RECORDS: PAGE 17

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With Funding Cuts Daybreak Homeless Shelter Still Trying to Help Those Most in Need

Tom Duggan
VALLEY PATRIOT PUBLISHER

Serving more than 1,500 meals per month and having room to shelter only 50 people per night, the Daybreak Homeless Shelter in Lawrence is in severe need of additional funding as well as a new facility.

According to Psychological Center CEO, Carina Pappalardo, the Daybreak Shelter serves 1,600 homeless people a year and has not had any significant funding increase in years. Pappalardo says that the shelter provides a safe place for the homeless, as well as food, helping them with linens, showers, and until recently, provided psychological services as well.

SUCCESS STORY

Pappalardo says that one of the more recent success stories is Marcial Batista. Batista is a former resident at the shelter who now comes to volunteer to help others in need and give them advice.

At 51 years old, Marcial says he is clean of drugs and alcohol now for the first time in decades. Born in Puerto Rico, he came to the United States when he was young, too young he says, for the life on the streets that awaited him.

“I used a lot of drugs for 37 years, heroin, I started with weed but then I went to heroin,” he says in a thick Spanish accent, sitting on the bench in what serves as a kitchen at the shelter.

“I came here in 1989. My mother died when I was three. My father was an alcoholic. My grandmother, when I was 9 years old, she threw me in the street. She said, ‘your father doesn’t send any money, or food.’”

“When I was 13, I went with two guys who were 18 years old, to the Bronx in NY. I got in a lot of trouble there.”

Marcial says while hooked on heroin, his life centered around criminal activities, sleeping anywhere he could, sometimes on the streets, sometimes in a shelter or an abandoned building. Eventually, he found himself in Chicago, where he joined a gang, became a drug dealer to support his habit, and stole cars. While in a gang, he explained through an interpreter, he was shot twice.

“I was living in the park, selling the drugs, robbing people, stealing cars. I was

shot twice for trying to leave the gang. That’s when I thought to come to Springfield, Massachusetts. I didn’t want to die on the streets.”

Within a short period of time, Marcial says he found himself in trouble again and moved to Lawrence to try and start over. It didn’t take long, he says, before he ended up living under the bridge near Pemberton Park along the Merrimack River.

“I slept under the bridge. It’s not safe. Very dangerous. In winter, it’s very cold. I was trying to make my life better. That’s why I moved so much. I went from New York, to Chicago, then to Springfield, then I come here. I’m still living under a bridge.”

Through an interpreter, Marcial said that the main reason he came to Lawrence was because of his lifestyle using drugs, and his multiple arrests, and he believed there were services that could help him.

“I was addicted when I came to Lawrence. When I first came, I was using heroin. I was under the bridge until I found out last year about Daybreak.”

Greg Davenport, a caseworker at Daybreak, says he remembers when Marcial first showed up.

“We kept wondering who this guy was, he would come at night, and then get in his car and drive off in the morning. So, I started talking to him. What I found out was that, he had lived a very dangerous life. He didn’t want to live in fear of being killed all the time. He had been part of a gang, living in a park in Chicago, and they shot Marcial twice because he wanted out. So, he knows what it’s like not to feel safe. He knows what it’s like to live in danger every minute of every day. So, when he came here, his only concern was whether or not he could sleep for a night without being in danger. Once he knew he was safe, we were able to get him into some programs and nudge him in the right direction. But the one thing I have learned here is that they have to want it. If they don’t want recovery, if they don’t want to make their lives better, we can at least give them a safe place to sleep for the night and hope they change their minds down the road.”

DAYBREAK CHANGING LIVES

“When I came here, I received good

“I use to sleep here. Now I come here from my place, I volunteer with groups at Daybreak and help people in the street. I counsel them, tell them my story. How I came to Daybreak and things got better for me.”

~ Marcial Batista of Haverhill



Currently, Daybreak Shelter is put together from construction trailers. It houses 35 male beds and 12 female beds. The City of Lawrence allows them to put three mattresses on the floor, for a total capacity of 50 people staying at the shelter each night.

care,” Batista says. “We have church groups coming in from local area, the word of God motivated me to change for the better. I got help with housing, food clothing, but also help to understand what to do next. How do I go on to the next step.”

“I think one of the things that is really telling about his case is that he when he first left here, he was renting a room at Windsor House on Broadway,” said Andy McMahon, Daybreak Shelter’s program director.

“He wasn’t there very long, though he ended up coming back here because it just wasn’t safe. Imagine, that a homeless shelter is safer than a rooming house but I try to discourage everyone from renting a room at a rooming house. The rooming houses are much more dangerous for people in recovery than it is here because we do not allow drugs or alcohol on the

property.”

Batista says that because of Daybreak and the programs they offered, he now has his own bed and his own apartment on Washington St. in Haverhill with a roommate (who also in recovery). Batista says that some of those programs that he was afforded are no longer available because of budget cuts and hopes additional funding can be found so that those who want help can get it.

Batista also says he wants to continue volunteering to help make sure others who find themselves on the streets know they have a chance to make their lives better if they want the help.

“I use to sleep here. Now I come here from my place, I volunteer with groups at Daybreak and help people in the street. I counsel them, tell them my story. How I came to Daybreak and things got better

DAYBREAK: PAGE 29

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The confidence that comes with knowing that you have the knowledge to save a life can be quite empowering. American Training just helped a group of Guests, the adults with disabilities whom they serve, find that confidence by holding their first ever CPR & First Aid class for Guests.

“Our Guests showed an interest in wanting to become certified in CPR and First Aid. They had been asking for a while, so we worked with our Training Specialist, Donny Wise, to make it happen,” said Alesia Matsis, a Program Director for the nonprofit.

So, Donny, who typically trains American Training’s Colleagues in everything from CPR to Human Rights, created a program to train a small group of Guests in CPR & First Aid.

“It was great,” said Donny, “I was very surprised as to how much they knew going into it. They were well informed. It made my job, teaching them, a lot easier.”

Donny spread the class out over a two-day period, providing hands-on training. He made a few changes to the class to make the training more fun and memorable; incorporating something American Training calls WOW! Magic. He even had the group doing chest compressions to the Bee Gees’ “Staying Alive” because of its perfect tempo for the task.

“The program was fabulous. They all participated; they were interested, asking questions. They really enjoyed the class,” said Alesia. “Donny was an awesome trainer. He got right in the middle of everything, explained everything, and they were able to complete the course.”

This month their hard work culminated in the presentation of the American Heart Association CPR & First Aid certification cards for all ten participants.

“I dreamt about getting my certification and helping someone,” said Andre D’eon at the presentation of the cards.

Linda Frazier, who is also now certified, said, “I wanted to become certified so I can jump into action if something happens.”

Alesia said the participants gained confidence through the training.

“Anyone in this group would really help if they saw someone in distress. Because of this training, they would be confident in assisting someone that was in need.”

Confidence is exactly what Donny hoped it would give them.

“I hope this really boosts their self-esteem and confidence, not just in CPR and First aid, but in life in general.

“The class was great. I now feel completely confident that if I was with any one of them and something happened to me, they would know what to do,” said Donny.

The participants of this first class, who are all now American Heart Association Certified in CPR & First Aid include: Andre D’eon, Linda Frazier, Craig S., Jeanette D., John S., Kenneth B., Patricia C., Phillis D., Robert N., and Ronald S.

Donny hopes to bring the CPR & First Aid Training for Guests to other programs and locations in the near future. See more photos from the training at americantraininginc.com/cprwakefield.

Learn more about American Training at americantraininginc.com or by calling 978-685-2151.



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NORTH ANDOVER SENIOR CENTER

2016 Medicare Part B Premium

You may have heard your Medicare Part B premium is going up. This is not true for everyone! Those whose Part B premium was deducted from their Social Security check last year will continue to pay \$104.90 per month.* Those newly enrolled in Part B this year will likely pay \$121.80 per month. People with limited income and assets may qualify for a program that will pay their premium. Those with incomes greater than \$85,000 per year (\$170,000 for a couple) have higher premiums and will pay between \$170.50 and \$389.80 per month for Part B. Trained SHINE (Serving Health Insurance Needs of Everyone...on Medicare) volunteers can help you through free, confidential counseling on all aspects of health insurance. To schedule a SHINE appointment, call your local Senior Center. For other SHINE related matters, call 1-800-AGE-INFO (1-800-243-4636) then press or say “3”. Once you get the SHINE answering machine, leave your name and telephone number and a volunteer will call you back as soon as possible. *There was no cost of living increase in Social Security benefits for 2016 and the law prevents benefit checks from being reduced. You may also call the North Andover Senior Center to set up an appointment with our SHINE Councilors. We are currently booking on a wait list basis. 978 688-9560.

Upcoming Socials at the Senior Center:

MEN’S BREAKFAST: Thursday, Dec. 10 at 9am. Meet at the NEW FIRE STATION for a tour and light refreshments.

NORTH ANDOVER MIDDLE SCHOOL CONCERT FOR SENIORS: Monday, Dec. 14 at the North Andover Senior Center at noon. All are welcome.

ROCKINGHAM MALL TRIP: Monday, Dec. 14 for holiday shopping. Pick-ups between 12:30-1pm. Call reception to reserve a seat on the van.

SUPPER CLUB: Thursday, Dec. 17 at the Bradford Tavern. Sign up begins Dec 2nd. Transportation cost is \$6, limited to 35 total NA Seniors.

LECTURE SERIES: Monday Dec 21 at 10am, a special program, “Sing for the Health of It”.

CHESS CLUB: Tuesdays, 1-3pm.

WOMEN’S FORUM: 4th Thursday of every month, 1:30-3pm. (will return in January)

ART CLASS: Tuesdays, 1-3 pm. \$60 for 6 classes

MAHJONG: Thursdays, 1-3 pm.

KNITTING: Tuesdays, 9:30-11:30am. New project “Hats for Vets and Kids”.

ONE-ON-ONE COMPUTER INSTRUCTION: 45-minute sessions for \$7, Tuesdays with George Chory and Thursdays with Tom Kookan. Hours are 9am-12pm. Make your appointments with reception 978-688-9560. This time can accommodate gadgets, too, if necessary

(Phones, Tablets, etc).

LECTURE SERIES: Every Monday 10-11:30am. Call reception 978-688-9560 for the schedule.

NEWS & VIEWS: Every Wednesday from 10-11:30am. Come and join in the lively discussion of current events, politics, history and you never know what else?!

MEET WITH AN ATTORNEY: Atty. Bridget Murray, Tuesday, Dec. 22; and Atty. Ramsey Bahrawy, Tuesday, Dec. 8. Schedule with Reception - first consult is free.

MR. FIX IT: 1st and 3rd Thursday of every month from 12-3pm. We repair almost as good as new. Lamps, with cords and sockets, replace watch batteries, small tables and chairs. Anything that is not listed, we will give it a shot! Your cost is \$2-\$4 depending on work needed, plus parts. Proceeds benefit the Senior Center.

WALK IN CLINIC: Wednesdays 9am-12pm, the North Andover Senior Center and Home Health Inc/VNA operate a wellness clinic. If you are a North Andover Senior, we urge you to take advantage of this opportunity to check your blood pressure, blood sugar, weight and blood oxygen levels. Consult privately with an RN regarding any medication and health issues that you are concerned about. There is no charge for this service. Donations are gratefully accepted.

ZUMBA WITH TALLIE!



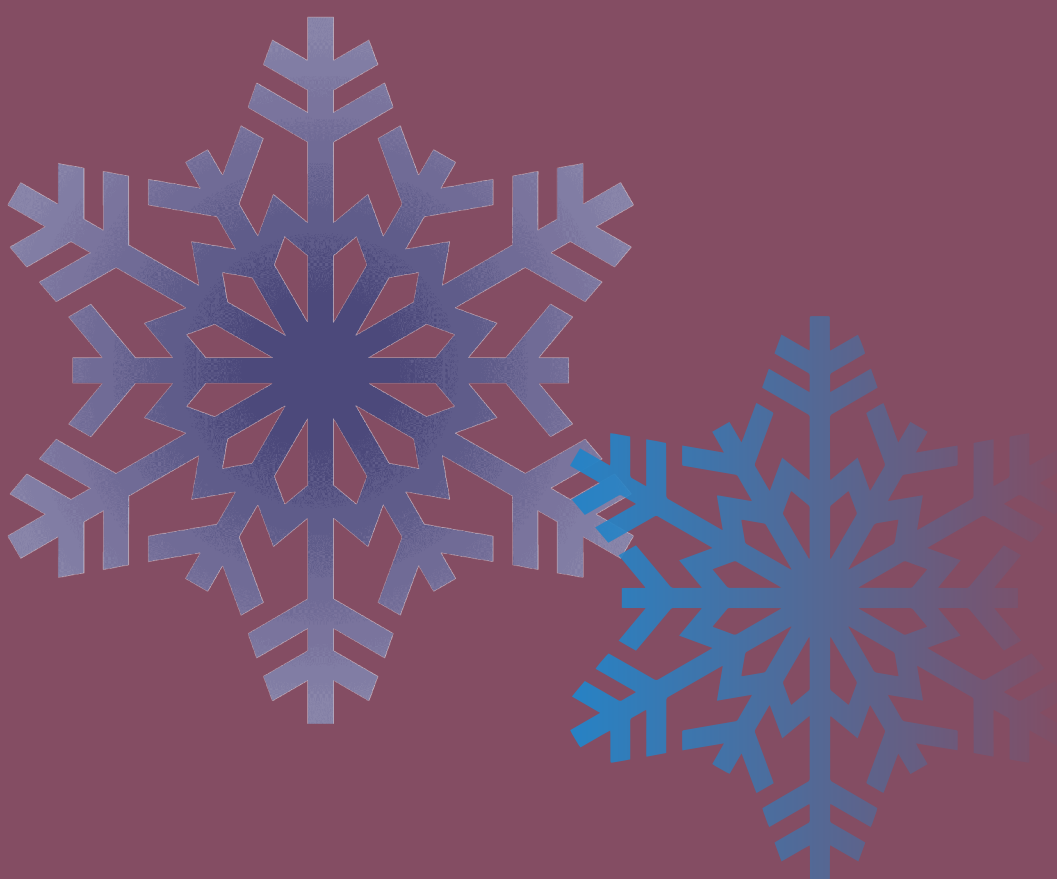
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First Muslim Elected in Lawrence Being Pressured to Resign ... Does Council Have Islamophobia?

Kemal Bozkurt is the first Muslim elected to public office in Lawrence. Bozkurt, the city's acting library director, ran a sticker campaign for school committee last month as there was not even one candidate on the ballot to fill the seat.

Now, Bozkurt is being pressured by members of the city council to either resign his school committee seat or give up his job as library director, claiming that holding both jobs is a conflict.

Given that Bozkurt hails from Turkey and is the first Muslim elected to any office in Lawrence, I have to wonder why members of the Lawrence City Council would be lying to Bozkurt about not being able to hold both jobs.

There is no state law, provision in the city charter, or city ordinance which states a city employee cannot sit on the school committee. Especially when you consider that the Lawrence School Committee really no longer exists.

Since the Lawrence Schools have been taken over by the state, the Lawrence School Committee acts only in an advisory role and has no legal authority, does not pass budgets, and has no say over hiring, firing or anything else.

So, you have to ask yourself why? Why would elected members of the city council lie to Mr. Bozkurt to pressure him to resign from one of his positions, when they know full well that no law dictates such action?

Kemal Bozkurt is a community activist who cares a great deal about the City of Lawrence. At a time when no one stepped forward to fill the school committee seat in his district, Kemal volunteered and mounted a sticker campaign to fill the job

that nobody wanted.

You have to wonder, if Bozkurt's name was Gonzalez or Gomez would members of the Lawrence City Council be working so hard to get him to resign under false pretenses. You also have to wonder if Bozkurt was a friend of City Council President Modesto Maldonado, if he would be welcomed with open arms, instead of being discriminated against because he is a Muslim.

You will be hard pressed to find anyone out there who is more suspicious of Muslims in our country, and our culture than I am, given the millions of Muslims promising to come here and kill us.

Many in the community who call me anti-Muslim are not all that far off in their labeling and stereotyping my position. However, being personally suspicious, and exhibiting Islamophobia when it comes to harassing a city employee to resign smacks of the same kind of prejudice and discrimination that Council President Maldonado and his cronies on the council whine about every single day.

I encourage Kemal Bozkurt to keep both his position as acting Library Director, and a member of the Lawrence School Committee. And if this kind of Islamophobic harassment continues, we encourage him to get a good lawyer and file suit against the city.

I also encourage Mayor Dan Rivera and members of the city council to welcome one of Lawrence's newest and proudest Muslim immigrants from Turkey, instead of trying to take advantage of his ignorance of our laws and deceptively trying to pressure him to go away.

to get behind, but we are going to hold you accountable," Rivera said referring to Lawrence Police Officer William Green, who is also supporting the recall effort and was the only public face of the recall for months.

"They thought they were going to get a couple of members of the city council to help them. Every day that I would discipline someone [city workers], I would get a call from the council president (Modesto Maldonado) saying 'hey, what are you doing?' and this is what I'm telling everyone. This has got to change. This is not about me. This is about

all of us."

In an exclusive interview after the rally, Rivera told The Valley Patriot that the recall effort is nothing more than supporters of former Mayor Lantigua trying to put him back into power, so they can continue ripping off the city.

"Listen, when you win by [84] votes and they tell you right away they are going to do a recall against you, you've gotta know that's what they are trying to do. So, when you get into office and you try to do the right thing, and you go after people we know haven't paid their taxes in all this time, and we go after employees that never should have been hired from the beginning, it's basically going after the

philosophy of the former administration. They are trying to keep their stronghold [on the city]. So, I'm not surprised he's [Lantigua] is involved in this."

Asked what he will do if the recall petition is successful and there is a special election to remove him, Rivera said he was taking it one day at a time, adding "when we get to that bride we will talk about that."

Rivera said that the constant recall efforts by former Mayor Lantigua and his supporters was a waste of time, money and city resources. He said that the time he must spend with the city clerk, the city attorney, and the distraction of the issue takes time away from governing the city. He added that this is what Lantigua and his supporters want, if they can't recall him they can hinder his ability to get major projects done.

"We know what the game is, and the people of Lawrence, the voters of Lawrence are not fooled. They see what's happening here. They didn't get their way in the last election so they are trying to undo the will of the people."

If the recall supporters get more than approximately 5,500 signatures from valid Lawrence voters, a recall election will be held where voters will be asked to vote on the removal of Rivera. If that question passes, Rivera is removed immediately and the person who gets the most votes on that day will assume the mayors office immediately to fill out the remainder of Rivera's term.

Mayor: Those Driving Recall Are Corrupt Lantigua Holdovers

Supporters of former Lawrence Mayor Willie Lantigua have turned in more than 8,000 signatures calling for a special election to recall current Mayor Dan Rivera. If the city certifies that at least 5,500 of those signatures are valid LAWrence Voters a special election will be called to throw Rivera out of office.

While most of the rallies and public events have been from Lantigua supporters and critics of Rivera, last month more than 100 people rallied on the Campaign Common in support of the mayor.

Rivera is in his second year of a four year term.

Former Lawrence Mayor Willie Lantigua vowed to throw Rivera out of office on the day he defeated Lantigua in November of 2013. Rivera defeated Lantigua by 84 votes. Lantigua supporters who aim to return Lantigua to power have two recall petitions callign for a special election to remove the mayor.

Mayor Rivera said that those supporting the recall are motivated by greed and corruption from the largess they enjoyed during the Lantigua administration saying they can no longer break the law with impunity and suddenly have to start paying their taxes.

"I don't know if you guys saw today's article in the paper (The Eagle-Tribune) about all the things they say we did or didn't do," Rivera said addressing the crowd.

"The reason I didn't respond to any of those questions is because this isn't about what we've done or not done. This is about a group of people who want to stop our progress," Rivera said.

Rivera said those supporting his ouster are angry because they are corrupt and he is rooting out the criminals of the Lantigua administration.

"We are doing what we were elected to do. We were elected to make sure that if you are being indicted, that you aren't on the [city] payroll. So we removed them from the payroll. We were elected because of the number of people on the payroll that just weren't qualified to be on the payroll. So, we took them off the payroll. We were elected to make [Lawrence] a more professional place to work, so we made people [in city hall] wear ties."

Lawrence resident Jackie Marmol (one of the pro-Rivera rally organizers), told the crowd across from Lawrence City Hall that Rivera is the hardest working mayor that Lawrence has seen in a very long time.

Marmol read a list of Rivera's accomplishments in his first year and half as mayor of Lawrence.

"Dan has brought in \$14M in development grants, fourteen new police officers, walking patrols, and monthly crime stats, thirteen new police cruisers, ten new firefighters, a new police and fire chief, 22 ball fields and 70 streets paved, and more to come."

Lawrence activist Angel Rivera said,

"we are here voluntarily because we love the city of Lawrence, and we support Dan Rivera and his administration. We want to send a clear and strong message of the excellent work that Mayor Dan Rivera has been doing during the first two years of his administration."

"I ask the people of Lawrence most emphatically, do not sign the recall petition in Lawrence. Do not allow anyone to fool you."

Lawrence City Councilor Dave Abdo, who ran unsuccessfully against Lantigua in 2009 said he opposes the recall petition against Rivera and urged people not to sign it.

"As you all know, outside the city we sometimes get a bad reputation. Sometimes it's self inflicted. Things like this recall is a self inflicted wound."

"Some people say, 'of course he's here, he's on Dan's team. I'm on Lawrence's team. I know that a recall is the worst possible thing for this city at this time."

State Rep. Marcos Devers said there is no comparison between former Mayor Lantigua and current mayor Rivera.

"There are many ghosts coming to the city of Lawrence," Devers said of former Mayor Lantigua.

"Well I am the ghost buster. We need to stand united. I am an oreo cookie!" Devers was referring to Laborer's Union Local 175 president Mike Gagliardi who supports the recall against Rivera and called him "an Oreo cookie" in last month's Valley Patriot.

Rivera said he brought a lot of money into the city since becoming mayor.

"You know, we hired this woman from Lowell to come to Lawrence and in her short time here with us, we've had more than \$14M in development grant money come into the city from state and federal government, not to mention the millions of dollars from private funding. So, forget about whether or not I messed up with hiring someone. That's not what it's about."

"This is about tax cheats, people who don't want to pay their taxes. When they call me and ask me, 'hey, can you help me not pay my taxes?' I say, 'no', that's illegal. I could go to jail and so can you. So, pay your taxes.' When we make those people pay their taxes they get angry. I don't care if you own a funeral home or if you own a grocery store," Rivera said referring to Louis Farrah of the Farrah Funeral home who is spearheading the effort to oust Rivera.

"If you are a police officer in this community and you treat people like crap, or you don't do your job, you are on notice. We are going to discipline you and you are going to be fired. So, you can get behind any political movement you want





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MAYOR OF LAWRENCE

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- * **MUST** Care about working families not being left in the gutter.
- * **MUST** enforce the city’s residency requirement for all outside contractors doing business with the city.
- * **MUST** pledge not to spend all your time sucking up to rich, white, republicans.
- * **MUST** not be a sexist or racist, and must focus on plight of Latinos in the City of Lawrence.
- * **MUST** focus more on being Mayor of Lawrence, than running for Congress or higher office.
- * **MUST** be willing to use police officers in a culturally sensitive way, not as a weapon against Latinos.
- * **MUST** be willing to hire Latinos in city hall who speak Spanish to service the community.
- * **MUST** be willing to resist hiring political hacks or use the office as mayor to settle political scores.

LAWRENCE NEEDS A NEW MAYOR! IF YOU THINK YOU HAVE WHAT IT TAKES, A RECALL ELECTION IS BEING HELD TO REPLACE DAN RIVERA AND WE WANT TO HELP YOU GET ON THE BALLOT!

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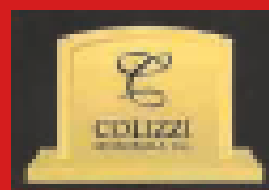
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Are there signs of active friendships, or isolation?
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News from the Reservation

Kathy Runge

VALLEY PATRIOT LAWRENCE COLUMNIST

Merry Christmas and greetings from Apache territory! In a pre-election article published at editorialweek.com, Jose Alfonso Garica's website, South Lawrence was referred to as Apache territory. I'm not sure if that's supposed to be offensive to Apaches, Anglos, or both. This man works for the school department.

It's been an exciting month. The City Council is going for a Guinness Book of World Records entry for the most violations of the Open Meeting Law. After another mind numbing descent into oblivion at their second meeting of November, they voted to approve a utility access easement that hadn't been reviewed by the City Attorney, "pending a public hearing." Abutters weren't notified and no notice was published. They can do all of that later. It was an "emergency."

At the end of that meeting they took a good twenty minutes trying to schedule committee meetings. This task is challenging since Council President Maldonado is only in the country part time. It was his suggestion to make all of the committee meetings the same week as the full council meetings so they could spend the other week on constituent services. I guess Mr. Maldonado is meeting with "constituents," just not in this country.

Scheduling around these absences is the reason why so many of the mayor's board appointments got approved because of council inaction. The Personnel Commit-

tee meets the day before the full council meeting, making it too late to put any items they discussed on the agenda for the next day's meeting. Of course all they have to do is suspend the rules, which they do with alarming regularity.

The Budget and Finance Committee meets the day after the full council meeting, which makes it impossible to comply with the Open Meeting Law. Where are those recall people, The Foundation for Transparency in Government, when you need them?

At the December first meeting the Council set the property tax rate by raising residential rates from \$15.12 to \$15.51. They also approved a Total Streets Ordinance, of which the goal is to enhance street and sidewalk access for pedestrians and all modes of transportation. That occurred in the public hearings portion of the meeting, which lasted until after 11pm.

Afterwards, the Council voted on two board appointments (suspend the rules!) and to send a letter to the owner of Polartec asking for information regarding layoffs at that company. They discussed the water and sewer rates and also what they would be talking about at the Committee of the Whole meeting that was scheduled for the next day.

What do these items have in common? They weren't on the agenda. What does The Foundation for Transparency in Government think about this?

The councilors act so valiant work-

LAWRENCE: PAGE 14



Lawrence City Councilor Marc LaPlante, State Rep. Marcos Devers, Mayor Rivera, Firefighter Zahn, and Chief Moriarty at the newly reopened Fire Station in South Lawrence. PHOTO: Jessica Valentin

Mayor Rivera Reopens Engine 9 in South Lawrence

More than five years after being closed because of budget cuts, Lawrence Mayor Dan Rivera has reopened the Engine 9 Fire Station on Bailey St., saying the station "will be operated by a minimum of three firefighters, one apparatus and one rescue boat twenty four hours a day, seven days a week."

"This is the best case scenario of doing more with less. Since day one, Chief Moriarty has been tasked with evaluating our fire department. With his leadership and the help of the union, we were able to re-open this asset in one of our more dense neighborhoods. We thank the union and the firefighters for their patience and cooperation through this process."

They mayor says that the opening of Engine 9 is a budget neutral move. "It is a re-deployment of staffing using resources we currently have. With the help of the DPW and the leadership of DPW Director John Isensee, Engine 9 underwent \$50,000 worth of improvements in two

months.

"This increases the safety and response times throughout the city," said Fire Chief Brian Moriarty. "I was thrilled to find a way to get it opened."

Lawrence City Councilor Marc LaPlante, whose district the fire station is located, has been pushing for the station reopening since the day it closed.

"Firefighters tell me that a critical facet to successful fighting is rapid response time. Reopening Bailey Street station is important and as a district councilor, this is something that I have been advocating for a long time," Laplante said.

"I am glad that the Rivera administrations, working with the new chief, were able to get this done."

"This fire station re-opening occurred after of the City invested \$850,000 to fix roofs, floors, heating systems and otherwise make the fire houses across the city more livable for our firefighters," Mayor Rivera concluded.

It's a Busy Time for Methuen Schools

DJ DEEB

METHUEN SCHOOL COMMITTEE

November and December are traditionally busy months for school districts. This year too is no exception and there are several things to report on this month in the paragraphs that follow: The City Elections, John & Abigail Adams Scholarship, MHS Band Disney Trip, and the PSATs in Methuen.

First off, I am honored to have been permitted to continue serving Methuen residents as a member of the Methuen School Committee. After losing the November 3rd Election by just three votes (Every Vote Counts!), Committee member Bryan Sweet unexpectedly announced a week later that he will be resigning for personal and professional reasons that have required him to relocate out-of-state. This took me and everyone else on the Committee by surprise. It was Bryan who edged me by just 3 votes, but we have become friends on the Committee working together closely these last 2 years. It is for these reasons, as well as the \$5,000-6,000 cost to taxpayers that I did not seek a recount after the November 3rd Election. It turns out that I will thus be returning to the Committee per the City Charter since I was the next highest vote getter. I wish Bryan Sweet well in his new endeavors and I look forward to continuing the good work that we began two years ago: Reducing the student drop-out rate, increasing graduation rates, lowering class sizes, and saving taxpayers over \$100,000 annually by reducing out-of-district Special Education placements. Best of luck, Bryan Sweet, in your new endeavors and thank you for your service to our community.

I am pleased to announce that there are 128 recipients in the Class of 2016 of the John and Abigail Adams Scholarship. These students have the option of attending a state college or university tuition free because of their high MCAS scores. Congratulations to all of these MHS students! We are proud of you!

Later this month, the MHS Band will be travelling to Walt Disney World to train with Disney conductors and march in the Christmas Parade. According to Methuen Ranger band Parents Association President Lynn Hajjar, "Unfortunately even with fundraising, some families cannot provide the \$1,100 necessary for travel expenses." If you are willing to sponsor a student in any amount you can mail your donation to Methuen Ranger Band Parents Association; P.O. Box 21, Methuen, MA 01844. Donors will be recognized on the website, Facebook, and in the spring concert program.

In September, public schools throughout the Commonwealth of Massachusetts were informed that the PSAT Exam would be administered during the school day on Wednesday, October 14th. The PSAT Exam is given by The College Board; a private educational testing company. In the past, this test has been administered on a Saturday outside of regular school hours, school districts have been reimbursed costs, and teacher volunteers have been paid a stipend by The College Board to proctor Saturday PSAT Exams. In 2015, it was decided by The College Board that the PSAT Exam would only be administered during the regular school day on Wednesday, October 14th. It is my belief that this takes away from student time on learning and sets a dangerous precedent regarding private companies using school facilities and public employees during school/work hours. PSAT is a practice test that not all students take and is not a requirement for college.



Students pay to take this test voluntarily and on their own. As public employees and elected public officials, we are regularly required to take the Conflict of Interest test given by the Massachusetts Ethics Commission. I am concerned that school resources and public school employees should not be used to administer an exam issued by a private company during school time. Bryan Sweet and I sent a letter to the Massachusetts State Ethics Commission in September inquiring: Does this violate the Conflict of Interest Section 23 (b) or any other Conflict of Interest statute in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts? I received a response in early October from Katherine Gallant, Deputy Chief of Investigations. Ms. Gallant wrote,

"We have conducted a careful review of the information you furnished to the State Ethics Commission by letter received here on September 23, 2005. Based on that review, and on any necessary follow-up investigation, we have determined that this matter does not warrant further action. This decision is based upon our conclusion that the use of school facilities and other district resources for the administration of the PSAT falls well within the school district's direction under M.G.L. c. 71 and, therefore does not raise concerns under M.G.L. c. 268A, Section 23".

Well, there it is. We have done our due diligence, but I still have a problem with this. As stated before, PSAT is a practice test that not all students take and is not a requirement for college. Students pay to take this test voluntarily and on their own. Many colleges have abandoned the SAT requirement and none require PSATs. Just last month, both UMass Lowell and Salem State University joined the national trend and completely dropped the SAT requirement for admission consideration. I recently learned that the Methuen School District pays for some of its students to take the PSAT, which is administered by College Board, which is in turn run by CEO David Coleman, the key architect of Common Core. Why should Methuen taxpayers divert funds to an organization promoting Common Core? I intend to make this an issue at future budget hearings.

My January column will include additional information about PSATs and outline some important items that I would like to see addressed in 2016. Have a Merry Christmas and safe and happy New Year!

D.J. Deeb is a Methuen resident and member of the Methuen School Committee. Deeb is an Adjunct Professor of History/Government at Bunker Hill Community College and an Adjunct Political Science Instructor at the University of Massachusetts Lowell. He teaches Social Studies full-time at Reading Memorial High School. He is the author of Israel, Palestine, and the Quest for Middle East Peace (University Press, 2013) and The Collapse of Middle East Peace (IUniverse, 2003).

TOM DUGGAN'S NOTEBOOK

DAVE SULLIVAN'S DEPARTURE

In February of 2007 we discovered an incredibly talented artist named Dave Sullivan of Dracut. He was suggested to us by Debbie Bodda, a woman we had been interviewing for a story. We met with Dave, asked him to send us a sample of his work, and hired him immediately. Since then, Dave has been drawing custom made, political cartoons based on the events of the day in the Merrimack Valley.

Over the years, Dave has done parodies of local mayors, city councilors, governors, the president, state representatives, and even me once or twice.

Each month I would call or email Dave and tell him which story we wanted him to focus on with a suggestion of who should be in it or how it should look. Within a day or two, a cartoon would show up in my inbox that looked exactly like what I had in my head when I described it to him.

I cannot stress enough, how critical Dave's talents have been to the success of The Valley Patriot. We are going to miss him and we sincerely hope that he changes his mind down the road and makes a contribution from time to time.

Throughout 2016 we will be re-publishing some of Dave's BEST cartoons in a new feature called THIS MONTH IN HISTORY, to show our readers what was going on in that month in local history. We are stunned, and saddened that Dave has chosen to move on to other endeavors, but wish him well and thank him from the bottom of our hearts for sharing his incredible gift with our readers over the last nine years.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE YANKEE SWAP IN METHUEN

Last month Methuen School Committeeman DJ Deeb lost his bid for re-election in a shocking turnaround where another incumbent, Brian Sweet, edged him out of an eight man race by a handful of votes.

But, a funny thing happened on the way to being sworn in. School Committeeman Sweet was offered a job that would make it impossible for him to continue his duties. (As an added note, we were a bit surprised to read about that online.) Sweet has announced he will not be sworn in to his next term, meaning that Deeb (a columnist for The Valley Patriot) will fill his seat. So, Sweet is out and Deeb is in. We want to congratulate both of them as they are both guys who truly care about the community and have served the City of Methuen well.

HEROES AND BOZOS OF 2015

HEROES - REP. DIANA DIZOGLIO (Methuen) and STATE SENATOR KATY IVES (Newburyport). Both DiZoglio and Ives worked tirelessly to get my public records bill a fair hearing in sub committees, made sure they were voted out of those committees favorably, held strong on penalties for law breakers, and then forced a full vote in the House of Representatives (The Senate is voting next month).

BOZO - OUTGOING HAVERHILL CITY COUNCILOR BILL RYAN

Ah, What can I say about my old pal Bill Ryan? He ran a dishonest campaign and the voters were not fooled. Ryan ran the failed state senate campaign for his son-in-law, (School Committeeman) Shaun Toohey last year, who, as a side note, lost his bid for re-election last month as well.

HEROES - JT TORRES, RANDY CARTER, & OUR LOCAL VETS

People may not know their names as well as other local hero vets, but in my book, JT Torres and Randy Carter should be lauded in our community for the volunteer work they do for our veterans.

BOZO - LAWRENCE COUNCIL PRESIDENT MODESTO MALDONADO

Modesto gets SUPER BOZO this year for a number of reasons. First, he is a puppet for Willie Lantigua, who is still calling the shots on the council. Next, Maldonado



COUNTRY KIDS CARE - METHUEN

Country Kids Child Care is a new child care program conveniently located at 114 Cross Street in Methuen with easy access to route 93 Pelham Street exit, Route 213, and Route 28 in Salem, New Hampshire. Country Kids Child Care is now enrolling children from 6 weeks to 5 years of age, as well as before and after school care for children 5-8 years of age. Hours of operation are from 7:00 am to 5:30 pm.

Country Kids Child Care is devotedly led by highly trained professionals, who are devoted to the goal of extending the nurturing embrace of your family. Our caring team of educators is committed to their professional development and continuing education. Our teachers provide a developmentally appropriate curriculum in which themes and skill sets follow the Massachusetts Early Education Guidelines and Standards and are creatively woven from and into your child's interests and ideas. This model of instruction keeps a high interest level which

fosters each child and his/her family's individual set of needs and goals. We prepare and celebrate each step of your child's development and stage of learning.

Country Kids Child Care provides a child friendly, warm, inviting and stimulating environment which ensures a safe and child appropriate learning setting.

Amy Conant-Greene, the owner/director of Country Kids, has over 20 years of teaching experience in both the public and private schools. She holds a Master's Degree in Education from Lesley College and a Special Education Degree from Salem State University. It has always been a dream of hers to open a center where she could share her love for teaching, and she is overjoyed with the new center!

For more information about Country Kids Child Care LLC, please contact her at amy@countrykidschildcarellc.com or by calling 987.688.0982 to set up an appointment for a tour of the child care center.

is a racist who not only labels and stereotypes people based on their ethnicity and place of origin, but he has also taken to the airwaves of Spanish language radio to disparage my dead father as a racist. Then, when I called him on it, he lied. Add to all that, Modesto's efforts to unseat Mayor Dan Rivera, his support for criminals, his hatred for the Lawrence Police Department and his behavior in public, and you can see why Maldonado is very high on this year's BOZO list. BOZOS - THE NORTH ANDOVER BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Even though I like most of the board personally, (and even supported many of them) they pulled a BOZO move last month when they scheduled the hiring of a new police chief just a few weeks before Selectman Rosemary Smedile will be on the ballot for re-election. The excuse they gave for this odd scheduling, was that they did NOT want the hiring to look "political". But, by scheduling the public hearings and the hiring of a new chief right before the local election, that is exactly how it looks. It looks exactly like the Board of

Selectmen are trying to help one of their colleagues get her name on the front page of the paper just a few short days before voters will be deciding at the polls whether or not to return Smedile to the board. The timing of this hiring will also make it a campaign issue where candidates will be asked to weigh in and take a position on the candidates in the running, (sure as hell, I will be asking those questions myself). The appearance of impropriety and the blatant politics being played on this issue will be fun to watch. I, for one, am glad they scheduled the hiring process to take place at election time. But lying about it earns them a spot on the BOZOS of the year list.

HERO - MASSACHUSETTS STATE AUDITOR SUZANNE BUMP

First, she belongs on the HERO list for being our Keynote speaker at The Valley Patriot's Annual BASH in March. But the reason we asked her to join us again this year was because of her work in stopping fraud in the welfare and EBT programs. Not to mention her calling out the Department of Children and Families for not

having systems in place to keep track of missing children, and her audits exposing waste fraud and abuse in state agencies that have long been considered sacred cows to the Democrat party she belongs to.

BOZOS - CNN REPORTERS

You know, it's funny. A white man said to be pro-life (we still do not know that he is) shoots up an abortion clinic. Within minutes, Anderson Cooper, Brooke Baldwin and the rest of the Democratic Party operatives at CNN were tripping over themselves to call the act "terrorism". In fact, Anderson Cooper said it was "OBVIOUS TERRORISM" and then followed up by asking, "What else could you possibly call it?" Yet, 48 hours later, two Islamic terrorists stormed a government Christmas party and murdered 14 people, critically injured 17, were clearly Muslim, had automatic weapons they used in a gun battle with police, were in contact with known terror groups... and despite all this, Anderson Cooper and the liars at CNN continued to say for three days that they needed to be cautious about calling it terrorism. Erin Burnette even postulated that the attack might have been from post-partum depression! So, a white man thought to be conservative in his politics is deemed a "terrorist" by CNN within MINUTES of the shooting, but not so much when the killers actually ARE terrorists. All I can say is that they are all BOZOS. (SIDE NOTE: Poppy Harlow is a real journalist and as always, was fair, impartial and exhibited common sense.)

BOZO - LAWRENCE MAYOR DAN RIVERA (SORRY DAN)

I do not support the recall of Dan Rivera, nor do I think he is doing a bad job as mayor. But, Dan makes the BOZO list this year because he chose to listen to people who know nothing about political strategy and have no institutional memory of Lawrence elections. At issue: Rivera's political strategy in trying to get his friend Jim Blatchford elected as a city councilor at-large last month. Blatchford placed third in the primary, just barely edging incumbent councilor Nilka Alvarez-Rodriguez into fourth (both were nominated but three get elected in November). It didn't help Blatchford that Rivera not only spent his day campaigning for another candidate in another race, but he endorsed both Alvarez and Blatchford for the same open spot in the at-large race. This gave Alvarez the edge to place third and edged out Rivera's candidate.

BOZOS - MASSACHUSETTS MUNICIPAL ASSOCIATION

The Massachusetts Municipal Association is a group of public officials and municipal workers who get together and lobby state lawmakers for things that make their jobs easier. Since I submitted my language to Beacon Hill to change the law on public records access, the MMA has done everything humanly possible to make sure they are not held accountable when their members refuse to release public records in their care. First, they tried to kill the reforms outright. In fact, the first two times I submitted my bill, they succeeded in killing it outright. But, once the bill began to gain support from both Tea Party members and left wing progressives, the MMA changed their tactic and began lobbying the legislature to water down the bill to make it less effective.

BOZO - ACTING ANDOVER TOWN MANAGER LARRY MURPHY

Larry Murphy is an MMA representative from the Town of Andover. He is also the acting town manager and as such, sent an email to state senators and state representatives on Beacon Hill using a Town of Andover email server, and identifying himself as the acting town manager in his email. This was an underhanded attempt to kill a public records reform bill and should have

CONTINUED: UNDER FREDDIE



DOLORES J. CAMPBELL

Attorney at Law

89 Main St
North Andover, MATel. 978-681-1221
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FREDDIE SAYS

“Tom Duggan wants a tablet for Christmas. You know, in case anyone was wondering.”

Freddie Says
EAT AT THE DAILY DOSE CAFE at PENTUCKET MEDICAL IN LAWRENCE
978-557-8601

been dealt with harshly by the Board of Selectmen. But it wasn't. So, A DOUBLE BOZO to the Andover Board of Selectmen who were well aware of the ethics violations and did nothing.

HERO - NORTH ANDOVER SELECTMAN PHIL DECOLOGERO

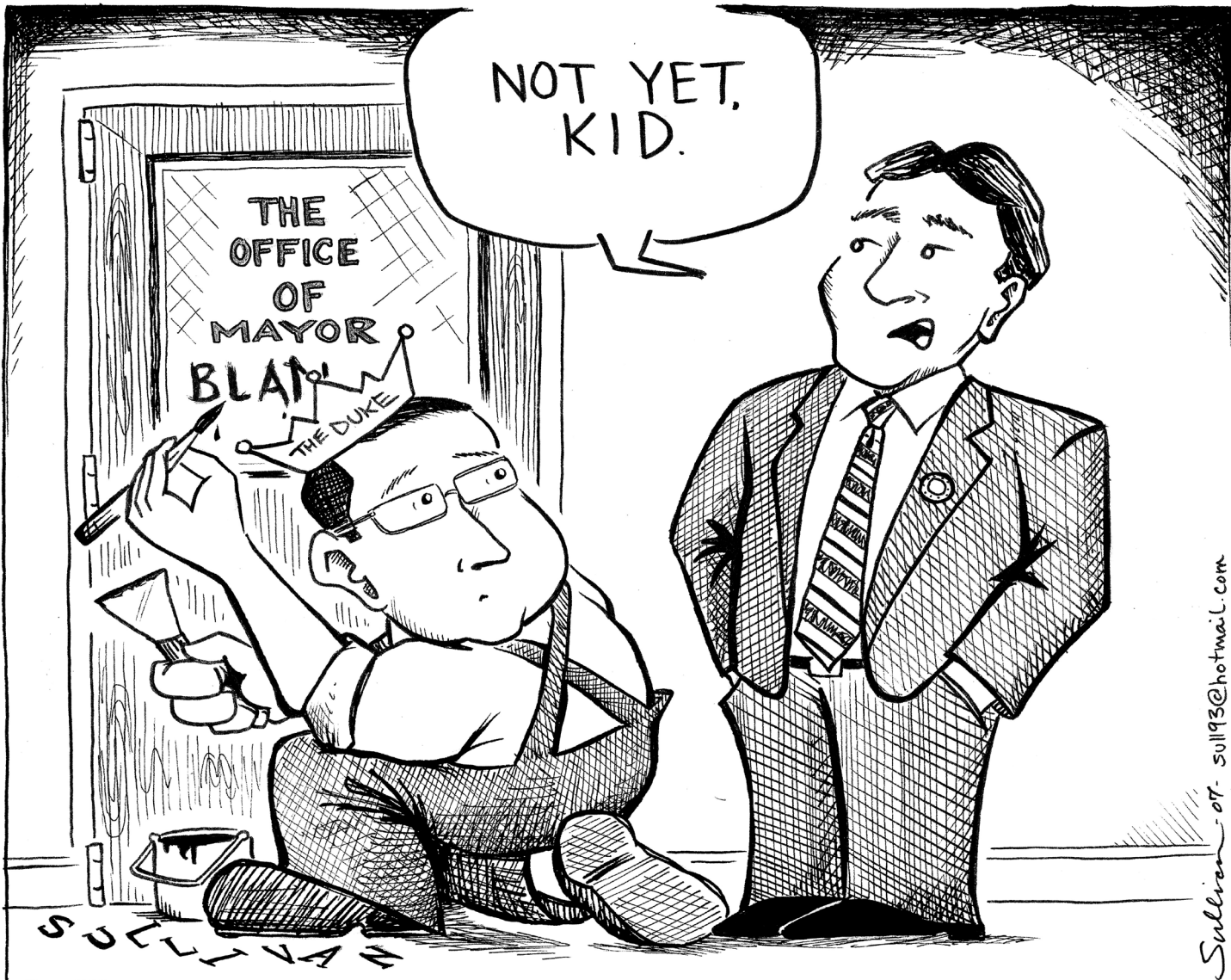
We lovingly call him “Phil of the Future” on my radio show and in The Valley Patriot office for a reason. North Andover Selectman Phil DeCologero sits on a five member board and is the only one proactive enough to reach out to the media to let the voters know about important votes coming up, actions the board has taken, or events coming up in the community. Phil also donates a lot of his time to the North Andover Merchant's Association and other charities but never says “look at me” or asks to have his picture in the paper.

BOZO - SANTA

I'm not sure why Santa couldn't make the SANTA parade in North Andover this year, but sending an inflatable Santa in his place was a pretty cheap move. Sure it's close to Christmas, and I know he's busy, but when you make a commitment to BE SANTA you damn well better think about all those kids who showed up thinking they were going to get to see THE SANTA CLAUS live and in person for the first time in their little lives. Next year I expect a personal appearance and something special for the kids of North Andover.

BOZO - CHICAGO MAYOR RAHM EMANNUEL

So, the Democrats are declaring war on cops in Chicago and the mayor of the Windy City has enlisted the perfect guy



Our Custom Cartoonist Dave Sullivan is leaving us after 9 years of providing brilliant local political cartoons. Next month will be Dave's last contribution with us. Above is Dave's first political cartoon ever with The Valley Patriot (February, 2007), when Lawrence City Council President Patrick Blanchette was vying for Mayor Sullivan's job and taking a few too many liberties.

to degrade, demoralize, and attack the Chicago PD.... former Massachusetts Governor (and cop killer advocate) Deval Patrick. Patrick as you may remember, fought as an attorney to put a cop killer back onto the street despite the fact that his chosen client stood over the officer and executed him while he begged for his life. Deval also spent his entire time as Massachusetts Governor attacking the police, calling them racist, and undermining public safety. Not to mention his letting Dominic Cinelli out on parole despite his three life sentences. Cinelli murdered Woburn Police Officer Jack Maguire just two days later. So, BRAVO to the mayor of Chicago for hiring Deval Patrick to attack our men and women in law enforcement. You really are a complete BOZO!

A QUOTE FROM WINSTON CHURCHILL

“How dreadful are the curses which Mohammedanism lays on its votaries! Besides the fanatical frenzy, which is as dangerous in a man as hydrophobia in a dog, there is this fearful fatalistic apathy. The effects are apparent in many countries, improvident habits, slovenly systems of agriculture, sluggish methods of commerce, and insecurity of property exist wherever the followers of the Prophet rule or live. A de-

NOTEBOOK: PAGE 29

VALLEY PATRIOT CARTOONIST DAVE SULLIVAN SAYS GOOD BYE!


I write this to announce, that as of January 31, 2016, I will be stepping down from my duties as the editorial cartoonist for The Valley Patriot. I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to the editorial staff for taking me on as a cog in your well-oiled and finely run machine. It's a wonderful feeling to know that my contribution, while small, had an impact on the publication.

To the readers of The Valley Patriot, I would like to say thank you to you as well. I got to meet a few of you, either in person or electronically, over the years. There really isn't a greater thrill for this cartoonist to know that you were reading, looking at and enjoying my drawings. If I ever, at any time, offended any of you in any way with my cartoons, I will unequivocally tell you: Blame Tom. I can't, however, say thank you adequately enough to Tom Duggan.

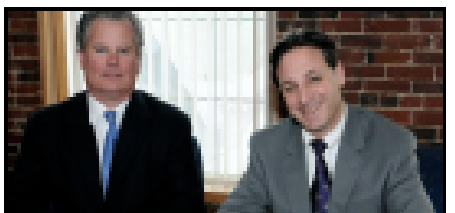
After hearing his gut-busting reaction to the first cartoon I drew for The Valley Patriot, (Patrick Blanchette, painting his name on the door to the mayor's office after he had scrapped off Mike Sullivan's name, all the way back in February of 2007), I was confident that I was in good hands. Tom and I would continue to combine our efforts every month for the next eight years. Sometimes our vision for what we wanted was crystal clear. Sometimes the muse of inspiration wouldn't arrive until the Sunday night before the paper had to be at the printer, which would make for a rather blurry-eyed Monday morning. It was often in those late Sunday night drawing sessions, hunched over my table, cross hatching like an obsessive-compulsive lunatic, that something became very apparent to me: I'm living my dream! As a kid, all I ever wanted was to have my funny pictures get published and be seen by an audience. I can, without a doubt, today, state that that dream has been fulfilled many times over. Tom Duggan helped fulfill that dream for me. He took this eager newlywed and soon to be father under his wing and said “fly.”

Again, I thank all of you for letting me into your lives every month for the last eight years. Although I won't miss having to sometimes draw Willie Lantigua's visage at two o'clock in the morning, I will certainly miss providing a small chuckle for The Valley Patriot staff and readership. I can only hope to still produce some chuckles in my future artistic endeavors. I hate saying goodbye, so I'll just leave you with ... until we meet again.

David Sullivan, Dracut, Massachusetts



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A Helping Light in a Darkened Area of Substance Abuse in New Hampshire

Will Salisbury’s Attorneys Finally Tell the Truth In Time to Save the Tomaselli Sisters’ Home

Rebecca Pearson
NEWBURYPORTGUIDE.COM

With recent reports hitting the news streams about the overwhelming opioid overdoses in our area and around the Massachusetts and New Hampshire borders, the question remains, are there enough long term facilities available for those overcoming substance abuse, whether it be from drug or alcohol? Many detoxes in the area hold a potential addict for a minimum of 3 days and a maximum of two weeks, but what happens after someone who is suffering from addiction gets released from detox.

Many times, the addict finds himself left with no numbers to call, no information regarding further treatment, and is back on the streets. As this growing epidemic continues, a need for more structured treatment homes are at an all-time high. New Hampshire has seen some huge numbers in the amount of overdoses in the past year. More than 300 people died or were recorded of having overdoses in 2014 in the Nashua and Manchester, NH area; and this year a staggering over 450 people as I can find in most recent available records.

The government has put forth grants to help build up the assistance with helping those fighting the battle of addiction, but where is the help now? How long will those government buildings take to get going? Recently I was introduced to a man that is hoping to just do that. Though the fundraising will take a bit to get underway, he has a plan set in motion to help not only with detoxes, but with residential housing for men and woman and sober living for men and woman once they have completed the residential treatment program.

His name is Robert F. Putnam. “The Robert F. Putnam Live With Love Foundation is a non-profit, community driven, charitable foundation to create educational awareness programs, treatment facilities, and recovery homes, to treat, heal, and prevent the overall epidemic of addiction and alcoholism that is tearing a hole in our New Hampshire communities,”

Robert states, “The vision of combating addiction/alcoholism from the founder, a recovering addict/alcoholic himself, is not to look at addiction from a substance standpoint but from the standpoint of “each individual’s soul, helping individuals regain a sense of self-worth and self-confidence by figuring out what inside of



them they are trying to silence.” Robert’s goal is to do this through love, compassion, understanding and acceptance, rather than hate, judgment, enabling and rejection. Robert has been able to subdue his disease through long-term residential treatment that allowed him to rebuild his sense of self-worth and self-confidence by getting down to the core of his disease and facing his underlying issues, which now he will help others learn through his experience. “This disease directly affects everyone in our community. It is time for our community to directly affect this disease.”

Robert Putnam has started his fundraising campaign by opening up a gofundme page (<https://www.gofundme.com/livewithlove>) and utilizing social media to begin the backbone of raising funds to secure property to start the process of creating the treatment facilities, but he needs the community support! I for one am very passionate about this and urge you if you can to help, a little goes a long way and every little bit helps. Robert will be planning a fundraiser come springtime and is hoping by the summer to have a designated spot picked and planned out to start helping those in need of assistance in the community. Please find the non-profit today online on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/livewithlovefoundation>. Their website should be up and running by the middle of November. Please join in the fight to help those that need help battling the horrible demon of addiction, and let’s help Robert F. Putnam gain the funds to start helping others. Just remember that addiction can hit anyone whether it be a coworker, a friend, a loved one, a brother or a sister, or yourself, so reach out a helping hand today and help show that lives, no matter who they are, matter.

On September 14, 2015 the Tomasellis went before the Salisbury Board of Selectmen/Sewer Commissioners and asked them to instruct attorneys for the town to tell the courts, that the Tomasellis were not responsible to pay for this sewer betterment. They did not own the property in 1982 when the assessment was “imposed”. Why hasn’t the town and their attorneys informed the courts?

The Town is aware that they never recorded this May 17, 1982 vote as required by law. Yet, their attorneys have always claimed the assessment was March 16, 1992 and that Tomaselli was liable because they owned the property on March 16, 1992.

The Town gave false information and false evidence to all the courts because, they claimed, the assessment vote was on March 16, 1992. Once the Town won in every court using this false March 16, 1992 date, they continued to fool each court in order for the town to win. This is

the primary reason the town won in every court. In March 2015, Town Manager Neil Harrington produced the Town’s concealed May 17, 1982 town vote. He only did so after being ordered to comply with Secretary of State Galvin’s order to release the public documents.

All the courts made their decision based on the wrong facts given by the Town.

You see, it has been very lucrative for the Town’s attorneys Kopelman and Paige and Coppola and Coppola to conceal public records from the courts and then give false information to the judges by claiming that the Tomaselli sisters were liable for a sewer betterment they were not ever liable for.

The Board of Selectmen were informed that the town had a duty to record the May 17, 1982 vote at the Registry of Deeds and bill the liable assessed owners who owned the property in 1982 NOT in 1992.

Selectmen Ed Hunt said we will get to the bottom of this.

LAWRENCE: FROM PAGE 11

ing until midnight. Just look at how hard they’re working, staying so late! But the situation is a direct result of incompetence. Much of it is due to Modesto Maldonado’s lack of preparation for the meetings.

The councilors tell us they routinely get their information packets mere hours or minutes before the meeting. Whose fault is that? Is the evil Mayor Rivera withholding agenda items and documentation from the Council? No, the blame lies solely with the Council, and by that I mean Council President Maldonado. How can the Council do its job properly when they don’t get any information until the very last minute? Their packets should be

available a few days before the meeting. Much of this can be remedied by removing Maldonado from the presidency. A new president will be elected at the first meeting of January. Mr. Maldonado is totally inept at supervising the construction of an agenda and leading meetings, and has an apparent disregard for the Open Meeting Law. He gets lost going through a three item agenda. We hear that District C Councilor Kendrys Vasquez is challenging Maldonado for the presidency. Please call your councilors and tell them to give the residents of Lawrence a New Year’s present by electing Kendrys Vasquez as the new Council President.

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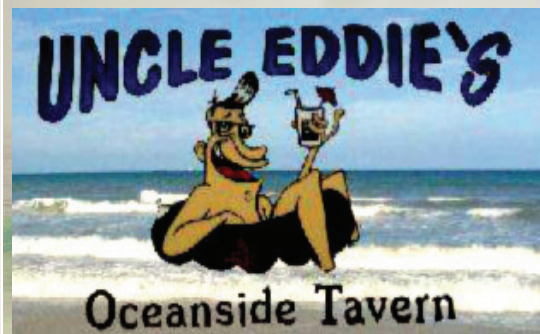
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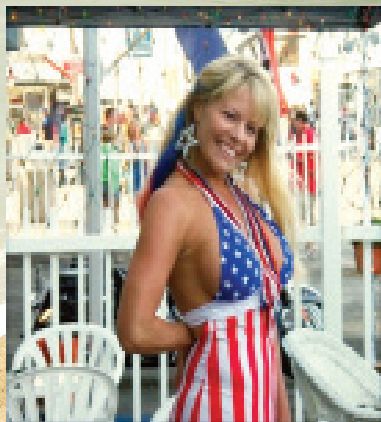
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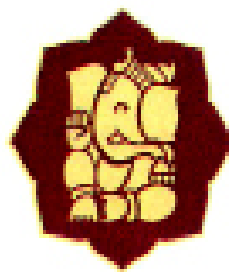
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Haverhill Mayor Jim Fiorentini Announces New Automated Trash Collection Program!

The City and Capitol Waste Services, the city's trash hauler, are pleased to announce Haverhill's new wheeled trash cart program. In the spring of 2016, the city will be switching from traditional trash barrels and manual trash collection to a new technologically advanced waste collection system. The program is designed to improve collection efficiency, enhance performance, and provides cleaner city streets and neighborhoods. It will also reduce the cost to Haverhill taxpayers of sending unnecessary trash to the Covanta Waste-to-Energy facility, with estimated savings over \$450,000 in the first year alone!

Automated trash collection is used by many communities in Massachusetts, New England and the rest of the country and works by having a sanitation worker control a robotic arm from inside the trash collection vehicle which has the ability to lift the specialized cart and dump the trash contents into the vehicle. The sanitation worker is able to do this safely within the vehicle, unexposed to the harsh elements

and without having to manually lift heavy trash carts. The new methodology will also help limit the debris and litter that often flies out of traditional garbage cans onto Haverhill's streets and yards.

In order to obtain feedback and first-hand experience from residents on the use of wheeled trash carts, the city implemented a pilot program during the past year by distributing over 400 wheeled carts to randomly selected residences. Participants were randomly chosen from a computer-generated program. Respondents from a recent survey indicated that over 97% preferred to use the wheeled trash cart instead of their previous method and that they would recommend the city implement this program city-wide. Please review the results of the survey by pasting the link into your browser... <https://www.surveymonkey.com/results/SM-FZQWDKFC/>

Each eligible household will receive one (1), sixty-four (64) gallon wheeled cart for their weekly trash. There is NO COST to the residents for these wheeled trash carts and they are covered under a

10-year warranty. Carts are manufactured to be very rugged with an attached, tight fitting lid that will keep rodents, rain and snow out of the container. Carts will be delivered directly to each household in the spring along with an informative guide that goes into detail about how the program works and how to use the wheeled trash cart. Only officially supplied carts will be collected on trash day. Delivering the carts citywide may take upwards of 2-3 weeks to complete. Recycling collection and methodology will NOT change and will continue to be picked up manually, every other week. We recommend that residents repurpose their "old" trash barrels into recycling containers once they receive the new wheeled trash cart.

Residents will still be allowed to place one (1) bulky waste item curbside per household per week at no charge. Bulky waste items include furniture, mattresses, tables, and other similar items that don't fit in the wheeled trash cart. The new trash collection vehicles cannot accept bulky waste items. Therefore, bulky waste items

must be scheduled for special collection by calling Capitol Waste. An additional benefit of this program is that residents are not limited to just one (1) bulky item per week, however a nominal fee applies if you have two (2) or more items. For example, under current regulations if you would like to dispose of a living room set it could take several weeks as you are only allowed one (1) per week. With this new program, you can schedule the collection of those items to be picked up all at once with no limit, as long as all items are accounted and paid for.

To help residents prepare for the new program and understand the changes, the city will conduct a public outreach campaign. The educational campaign will include mailings, presentations, and informational programming on the city website. The city will also hold public meetings in each of the five trash routes with the goal of ensuring residents are ready for the switch to automated trash collection next spring.



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Section 8 Voucher Holders Encouraged to Apply.
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There are 8 units set aside for incomes that are at or below 30% of area median incomes. These units will be covered under a Project-Based Section 8 contract

**Applicants for all 56 units will be chosen through a
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All applicants must meet the property's Resident Selection Plan criteria.

Applications will be taken from NOW- 1/15/16.

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HALLKEEN MANAGEMENT





It was a privilege to be with Executive Director John Ratka of the Veterans Northeast Outreach Center, Congressman Niki Tsongas, and City and State leaders to unveil 27 new units of housing for our Veterans in the City of Haverhill. Incredible teamwork among state government and lending organizations and generous private donations made this possible. The Veteran's Northeast Outreach Center also helps Veterans seeking employment and treatment for mental and physical illness associated with their service.

House Passes Public Records and Solar Legislation – Both Need Changes in Senate

Before Thanksgiving, the Massachusetts House passed two important pieces of legislation. One of these bills will make significant changes to our antiquated public records law. The other will lift the cap on solar energy production to take advantage of existing solar projects and expiring federal tax credits. Both bills are important steps in the right direction, but both need changes and additions.

First, as you probably know from reading The Valley Patriot, Massachusetts public records law is among the weakest in the nation and has not been measurably changed in over 40 years. As a cosponsor of The Valley Patriot's reform bill, I have fully supported this effort to update our laws as this public records reform has moved through the legislative process.

The Bill that passed the house takes measures to make access affordable, ensures that requested public records are delivered in a timely manner, and designates a responsible Records Access Officer in each municipality and state agency. Most importantly, it allows for the Attorney General to step in when information is not provided in a timely manner.

Despite these changes, I am sympathetic

to the argument made by a number of experts and observers that the timeframes for responses to public record requests are too long in this bill, and that the window for appeals when records are denied is far too short to be reasonable for average citizens.

I believe we will see modifications in the Senate where the bill rests to be debated upon. There will be a need to iron out differences between the House and Senate.

The House also sent legislation to the Senate, lifting the solar cap which will allow for a predictable and stable framework for the growth of the solar industry in Massachusetts. This legislation was needed to ensure that Massachusetts takes advantage of all the federal credits available and to ensure solar projects already underway in many communities are completed.

This bill will ensure the Commonwealth's role as a leader in solar energy production while protecting ratepayers who cannot take advantage of solar energy installations. Unfortunately, this bill is not a comprehensive energy plan incorporating all forms of energy. It is very important that we develop a more broad-based strategy as we phase out Yankee Pilgrim nuclear power plant in

ENERGY: PAGE 25

Will Trump Prevail?

John MacDonald
VALLEY PATRIOT LOWELL COLUMNIST

The question of whether or not Donald Trump will prevail as the Republican nominee for president or has a chance to run for president and win is extremely disturbing to the establishment in both parties. Trump has been bombastic, controversial, knee jerk, overly sensitive and unscripted. Everything a traditional politician is not, has never been and it's working. Despite all of the things he has said, like them or not, politically correct or not, is somewhat appreciated and accepted by a silent majority. Donald Trump is feeding the silent majority that has watched a nation they love and cherish become something they no longer recognize.

President Obama ran on change, and the changes he has made does not appear to satisfy many Americans. Seven years of a progressive agenda has left many conservatives, moderates and even some liberals in a position of uncertainty. Americans have watched events and problems unfold that have been approached with anything but a traditional style or the values the country has held dear for generations.

President Bush was no prize either, and created an environment that made it possible for the country to elect a progressive President Obama. The country was ready for anything other than what resembled another President Bush style presidency. Now after another horrible seven years of anything but Bush, President Obama has created the political environment to usher in a President Trump. Seven years of over sensitive political correctness, disrespect for law enforcement, racial tensions reminiscent of the 1960's, a soft economy with no real sense of job recovery, homegrown terrorism, ISIS and just plain uncertainty of where we stand in the world has created the conditions for Donald Trump to suc-



ceed.
So as "The Donald" continues to identify hot button issues with an almost "Nostradamus" pin point accuracy/nose for critical events, the evolution of his sensationalized campaign for president grows stronger in the polls. For what political experts predicted would eventually wear thin with the American people, instead grows significantly. The more Trump thumbs his nose at the press and a national media that seem to have a left leaning progressive agenda and are no longer trusted, or the more he's criticized by the established right wing conservatives that throw millions to guys like Jeb Bush... Donald Trump will thrive.
Why? Because Americans really do want to be great again. We're Americans! We believe in freedom and God. We think we're the guys who wear the white hats and build incredible things. We pride ourselves on innovation and long hours of working hard. We crave success and are never satisfied. We're the country that landed on the moon ... FIRST! We don't want to be like Europe or Europeans, because we despise their attitudes and we're the country that was founded by people that kicked their asses out of Boston. We like winning. We don't like losing.
Now do you get why Donald Trump is winning? Will he prevail? Time will tell, but as long as he continues to feed the beast of kick you in the crotch American patriotic pride... he just might.

FROM PAGE 3: PUBLIC RECORDS PASSES HOUSE

the measure and passed it unanimously, but not without modifying the bill significantly. (SEE END OF COLUMN).

The bill can still be changed in the Senate, but any modifications would have to be approved by the House again before Governor Baker can sign it into law.

If the House and Senate cannot come to mutually agreeable language, a joint committee of senators and representatives to negotiate the final wording of the bill will reconcile. It will then go the governor's desk to be signed or vetoed (rejected).

Even if the governor vetoes the bill, it can still be passed by two-thirds vote of the legislature.

DISTURBING LOOPHOLE

Much of the language in the new Public Records Bill (1) does exactly what Duggan says he intended: hold public officials accountable. But, he says, the bill does have one loophole making the rest of the language in the bill completely irrelevant.

Duggan says he met privately with Ways and Means Chairman Dempsey just days before the final wording of the bill was released. He also met with chairman Kocot to try and close loopholes in the bill.

"I was very troubled at how quickly they bent over for the insiders and lobbyists who shill for the very people paying the fines when they conceal public records. They actually have a provision in this bill that says a public official does not have to turn over public records if their feelings get hurt. I couldn't make that up if I tried. Now, for the first time in the history of this country, a public record can be deemed NOT a public record if a government official says he feels 'harassed or intimidated'

by the request." "What public official isn't going to feel harassed or intimidated when a newspaper is investigating their finances? It's absurd."

"I have a lot of faith in the Senate. In particular, Senators Ives and Eldridge, who have been very solidly behind public disclosure laws and this bill in particular. First order of business is to take out the language about hurting people's feelings. Then stiff financial penalties need to be put back in."

GALVIN CONCEDES

Secretary of State Bill Galvin has dropped his own watered down version of public records reform passed after having his employees and "interns" gather signatures on state time for a ballot initiative. Galvin's initiative petition would have stripped most of the more stringent provisions of Duggan's bill. Galvin has himself been the subject of complaints for concealing public records. Under the current law, Galvin as Secretary of State is responsible for investigating all complaints for public records violations.

Galvin tried to initially block the public records reform bill completely, but changed his tune just weeks before the measure was voted on in the house. Galvin told a joint subcommittee that he wanted to decide the language of the new public records law, calling for a public records commission to decide what is and what is not a public record. When that failed, he decided to try and get a ballot question to get the changes he wanted, but conceded that effort as we were going to print.

WHAT THE NEW BILL SAYS

* Create a Public Records Officer for

- all public agencies, including cities and towns.
- * Public entities cannot charge more than 5 cents per page for public records.
 - * Government Officials must allow the public to inspect or copy documents within ten (10) days upon request.
 - * Public records can be concealed or withheld if "the request for public records is designed or intended to harass or intimidate the agency, municipality."
 - * Changes the 10-day requirement for turning over documents to 30 days under certain circumstances, and can even be extend to 60 days or longer.
 - * No penalties to be assessed on public officials who willingly conceal or withhold public records.
 - * Public agencies (meaning the taxpayers, not officials themselves) will be fined for failing to turn over public records.
 - * Those fines will be paid to the STATE not members of the public who were refused the documents in the first place.
 - * Allows a member of the public to receive public records electronically in an email, a CD, USB card or other electronic devices.
 - * If records are withheld, members of the public can file a complaint against the agency, city or town, in the Superior Court of the county where the records are situated, or, for any agency, in the Superior Court for Suffolk County.
 - * Records are to be presumed public, as the burden shall be on the public agency or municipality to prove that records sought or portions thereof, are not public records.
 - * Whenever a member of the public receives a judgment against a government



agency for withholding requested records, or acted maliciously, or in bad faith by concealing public records, the Superior Court may assess punitive damages not less than \$1,000 nor more than \$5,000, to be awarded to the complainant.

- * Allows the Massachusetts Attorney General to order compliance with the law and file suit against such agency, (EDITORS NOTE: This language is also in the current law, however, a total of ZERO cases have been taken up by the AG on public records law violations in the last 40 years).
- * Allows a Superior Court judge to privately inspect records in dispute and decide if the records are indeed public documents to be released.
- * Public agencies and municipalities must put public records on a searchable website, but only certain categories of public records, such as construction bids, agency or city budgets, minutes of public meetings, etc.



North Andover may have had an inflatable Santa but the REAL Santa was on hand in Methuen to greet all the boys and girls of Methuen and the surrounding area.



The 22nd Annual Festival of Trees

Jen Jones
VALLEY PATRIOT CONTRIBUTOR

The Festival of Trees does it again! Year after year, hundreds of uniquely decorated festive holiday trees and wreaths are on display, as well as many wonderful auction items; each one better than the last. If you have not been to the Festival of Trees, you should rethink this and make it your new tradition as my family, friends, and I have for the last 22 years. This year the event continued to be held at the Valley Office Park located at 13 Branch Street in Methuen, Massachusetts 01844, and ran from November 21-December 5.

This annual event originated as a fundraiser for the Tenney Gatehouse in an effort to restore the historical building, and maintain the history of our community. This organization has since restored and preserved numerous historical sites and buildings including, but not limited to: Holy Family Hospital, multiple libraries in surrounding areas (Methuen's Nevins Memorial Library, Billerica's Bennett Library Association, and North Andover's Stevens Memorial Library), Winnekenni Castle in Haverhill, Whistler House and Museum, churches, meetinghouses, Historic Handtub House (Rocks Village), The Searles Building (Methuen City Hall), cemeteries, Methuen Memorial Music Hall, Andover Historical Society's Amos Blanchard House, The Methuen Masonic Lodge, train depots, and other various historical projects throughout Massachusetts and New Hampshire.

The majority of the submissions are from Methuen residents, The committee does allow some special submissions from other neighboring cities and towns. All of the trees are thoughtfully planned and crafted by members of service groups, schools, families, and businesses. Their Founder's Club is unique because the following businesses, organizations, and people have actively participated in this event since the 1994 from the very begin-

ning: Jim & Paula Jajuga, Sharon Pollard & Thomas Lussier, Methuen Exchange Club, Methuen Historical Society, Charles Beauty Wellness, Inc., Methuen Historical Society, Ray & Kay DiFiore, Methuen Board of Trade, and Presentation of Mary Academy.

Whether you are looking for fun for the whole family, or a great date night, it's the perfect spot to get in the holiday spirit with the ones you love. They offer a decent menu in the café with a variety of food, snacks, desserts, and beverages including chicken barb sandwiches, cheese fries, pizza, chocolate cake, and apple crisp; just a few of the treats they have readily available to purchase if you did not have the opportunity to have dinner before you get lost in all the glitzy lights. The chicken barb reminded me of Bea's, and the chocolate cake was moist and rich.

Creative ideas and interesting themes are thoughtfully planned and carried out with a festive spin on holiday trees, wreaths, and other decorations. Some of the most interesting sites to have seen were: the themed Star Wars large tree "May the Force Of Peace Be With You", Mann Orchards "Up On The Roof Top", and the Methuen Exchange Club of Methuen's "Duty, Honor, Country" trees. If I had to narrow down my top picks of the event, they would be the Dr. Who themed "A Timey-Wimey Christmas", The "Silver and Gold" wreath by Paul & Denis Webster Greene, The Lantern for the mini trees, and I could not take my eyes off the best use of theme display because it had so much detail.

Since all the trees and wreaths are raffled off after the event closes for the season on December 5th, with all the spectacular submissions it was hard to choose which trees to put the raffle tickets in. There is one raffle that is the main attraction, and gives the highest payout: the beautifully decorated Charles Tree and a whopping \$5,000 in cold hard cash.



Hollywood actor Ben Affleck was in Lawrence last month shooting his latest movie (top and left bottom photo). Not only did our Valley Patriot news spotters get some good photos of Affleck, but a member of The Valley Patriot family, Derrick Feole of Lawrence (who also has a home in Switzerland), made his way onto the set as an extra. Way to go Derrick!




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**MARK YOUR CALENDAR! The date has been set for
THE VALLEY PATRIOT'S 12th ANNIVERSARY BASH
March 25th at the Firefighter's Relief In at 6:30PM**



WBZ Talk radio host Dan Rea of “Nightside with Dan Rea” was the official emcee again this year at the annual Veterans Assisting Veterans black tie dinner, and took a minute to pose with his copy of The Valley Patriot. Rea is good friends with Lawrence Mayor Dan Rivera and said he was shocked to see that a recall was taking place in Lawrence, telling us to wish Dan well.



Valley Patriot Publisher Tom Duggan, Brigadier General John Hammond (ret.), Haverhill resident and Valley Patriot news spotter Jack Roy, and Massachusetts Secretary of Veterans Services Francisco Urena of Lawrence.

Veterans Assisting Veterans Raises 60K for Local Veterans at its Annual Black Tie Event

Veterans Assisting Veterans (VAV) recently held its annual black tie dinner at the Burlington Marriot and raised \$60,000, which will benefit local veterans, veteran organizations and veteran causes. VAV is 100% volunteer and is a 501C3. VAV has also been responsible for conducting events throughout the local area, such as a Candlelit Vigil held at VFW Post 662 in honor of the fallen soldiers in Chattanooga, TN. VAV dedicated permanent POW/MIA Chairs at Lowell City Hall, Lawrence City Hall, Lawrence Memorial Stadium and The Lowell Sun. VAV has many local board members and honorary board members to include employees of the Lowell Sun, Jim Campanini and Dan Phelps, Lowell Mayor Rodney Elliott, Lowell City Councilor’s Rita Mercier and Dan Rourke along with State Representative’s Colleen Garry and Thomas Golden.

This year’s money raised will be donated to local veteran charities that make an impact directly for veterans. Veterans Northeast Outreach Center, which houses veterans and operates throughout the Merrimack Valley, Ironstone Farms that has a program to help veterans suffering from PTSD, NEADS that supports the training of service dogs and Veterans Homestead, which operates a hospice for veterans in Fitchburg to name a few.



L-R, Ramiro Espino, the Dominican Republic Secretary of State, David Daly, owner and CEO of PrideStar EMS, Carol Day, and Ed Daly, VP Marketing PrideStar EMS. David Daly is accepting a National recognition plaque from Mr. Espino to PrideStar EMS for its generosity to the Dominican Republic and its people. PrideStar has donated two ambulances and medical supplies to the Dominican Republic in the past two years, working with Community Christian Fellowship based in Lowell.

METHUEN — Chief Joseph Solomon and the Methuen Police Department are pleased to announce that Officer Thomas R. Torrissi, Jr. was awarded the 2015 Police Officer of the Year Award by the Methuen Exchange Club at a ceremony on Wednesday, Nov. 18.

Earlier this year in February, Officer Torrissi responded to a report of a female in cardiac arrest. Upon arrival, he utilized his department AED to revive the woman and, ultimately, save her life.

Christine Prescott, the woman whose life was saved, also attended the ceremony and personally thanked Officer Torrissi on behalf of her family and her young son, Nicholas (l) . Officer Torrissi’s son, Christopher, (r) was also on hand to congratulate his dad!



Patrick Costello of the Merrimack Valley Girl’s High School Fall Basketball League, and Lisa Williams of Doctors Express North Andover. Costello presented Williams with a jersey for her sponsorship of North Andover’s team for the 2015 season.

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Ye Gay Ol' Valley

The War on Public Education

Dani B. Langiven
VALLEY PATRIOT LESBIAN COLUMNIST

I used to love my career. I was proud to be an educator. I woke up every day looking forward to the curriculum I taught, the students I got to inspire, and the colleagues with whom I collaborated. For 20 years I knew I was making a difference in thousands of children's lives. For more than half of those years I was doing what I loved most: teaching history. Between 2004-2014, I was teaching a grade I loved: grade 8.

I was more than good what I did; I was excellent. I immersed myself in my career as an educator and in the subject of history. Personal vacations were planned to places that were connected to my curriculum so that I could teach through experience. I went to Mayan ruins, Taino villages, English castles, and Roman ruins to name a few. I couldn't even go away for a two-day weekend without looking for some little treasure to bring back to my classroom whether it were something tangible or simply informational to enhance a lesson. I was quite literally in love with my career.

That changed last year. Because of the federal and state mandated testing that is now tied to teacher evaluations, the system I work for dissolved the all history teaching position at the seventh and eighth grade levels. Why? Because history is not on any of the tests so, how could my evaluation be tied to them? I'll tell you: attach history teachers' evaluations to the language arts scores. We teach reading, writing, and all aspects of language arts through historical events. How can administrators not see that? They either didn't, couldn't or refused to and ripped history teachers away from their passion and relocated them. I was moved to grade 5 and told I had to teach two 90-minute blocks of language arts, two half hour classes of social studies, and one half hour of a class called "enrichment". The career I love instantly became a job I now barely tolerate. In fact, every one of my history teaching colleagues were taken out of teaching the subject in which they are passionate experts.

The dissatisfaction in what is being done in classroom across the country is not limited to the random history teacher. Walk into any school in any state and speak with any teacher. You will see a micro-managed, over worked, under paid, under appreciated, highly educated professional who is angry, resentful, and probably a little more than bitter.

In a vocation where we are demanded to provide clear objectives and expectations

for our students, demonstrate what it is they are expected to accomplish, give exemplars, and make sure we differentiate for every type of learning need, disability, and interest, we are treated the exact opposite by administration. Example: Last year the Lucy Calkins writing program was adopted by my system. It is has four units consisting of the writing of a personal narrative, research paper, persuasive essay, and memoir and yes, that is at the fifth grade level, too. Teachers were given a box of 7 books that covered this writing curriculum along with what is called an "Atlas" that outlines the timeline of when each unit is to be taught and for how long. We were not trained in the new program, but simply told, "Do the best you can." That's it. No objectives, demonstrations, time to practice the craft or collaborate with colleagues, and certainly no exemplars on how to differentiate were provided. The only information offered was to make sure you followed the Atlas timeline and make sure that student scores increased on the MCAS. This is method of instructing teachers is contrary to everything an educator is trained to do within his or her own classroom. We were being treated with monumental less respect than our students.

The workload placed upon educators is devastatingly overwhelming. Besides constantly teaching to the test, every teacher must pre and post-assess; conduct mid-workshop check-ins; analyze data; determine where every single student is in regards to the common core; find strategies to reach every single student; create lesson plans that differentiate for every single student; teach safety, respect, and responsibility; communicate with parents, guidance, and administration; fill out forms for students who misbehave, don't follow directions, can't concentrate, or don't do classwork or homework and that is only scratching the surface. Not only that, all of this is done every day with an allowance of a 60-minute prep time when students are in their non-academic classes. In the last month I have graded/assessed, by my calculations, no less than 1,000 various assignments. There hasn't been a weekend I haven't brought work home.

Adding to an educator's frustration and indignation is that "homework" for us, is expected. One weekend, I was reading and planning the next unit of Lucy Calkins because I, a history teacher, am not educated in how to teach writing so I was training myself. It actually said in the teacher instructions, "-plan on spending 3-4 days

EDUCATION: PAGE 28

Beneath the Surface

The Media's Obsession with Tim Tebow's Sex Life

Paul Murano
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

The press has been having a lot of fun at the expense of Tim Tebow lately. It was reported that the quarterback's girlfriend, a former Miss USA, dumped him because he insisted on no premarital sex. TMZ later claimed the story may have been untrue and that they never actually dated, but countless news sources continue to run the story to mock Tebow. Irresponsible journalism aside, it is time to go beneath the surface on the foolishness of this malicious attitude that is so prevalent today.

Yes, it is evident that Tebow is motivated and inspired by his Christian faith. As a Catholic, I too know that premarital sex (fornication) is the matter of mortal sin, i.e. if chosen with full knowledge and consent is a rejection of God. Reason can also see that it mocks marriage and real love. Nonetheless, this Christian doctrine, which takes into account the natural and divine order and the meaning and purpose of marriage, now has science behind it. Although the modern world has rationalized and denied its way into making premarital sex the chief sacrament of the worship of Self, there is now new scientific evidence to support what was intuitively known from antiquity until the sexual revolution. Exciting new discoveries on the affects of telegony and microchimerism in women may lead to more insight into the meaning of the biblical phrase "the two become one flesh", and change the way people look at sex.

First, let us look at telegony. Aristotle taught it, medieval kings and princes married virgins because of it, animal breeders still breed according to it, and now modern science points to it. What is it? Telegony is the claim that semen from previous lovers can affect a woman's future offspring genetically fathered by another man. Although this belief in times past was widespread, modern genetics seemed to discount it. But new evidence indicates that even when pregnancy does not occur, semen may epigenetically alter the balance of the eggs a woman holds for her entire fertile life when sperm swim up to the fimbriae of the fallopian tube toward the ovary. When a future mate fertilizes a woman, becoming the genetic father of her offspring, the child may be phenotypically influenced by previous partners. In other words, traits from previous sexual partners may appear in the offspring by virtue of the affect their genetic material had her the eggs stored in her ovary. In October 2014, Time Magazine published an article called, "How Previous Sexual Partners Affect Offspring". It highlighted serious research conducted at the University of South Wales that was published in Ecology Letters.

Another discovery gaining scientific support is that of female microchimerism: finding male DNA and Y chromosomes in the

brains and bloodstreams of women. (The word chimera refers to two different bodies merging into one.) The American Journal of Medicine published the findings of a community of doctors who examined the brains of deceased women and found many to carry the male DNA. Cells remaining in the bloodstream of the women from male offspring was said to be a cause, regardless of whether the offspring was eventually born, miscarried, or aborted. It appears this male DNA from offspring, originating in the male sexual partner, may continue to live on in the woman becoming part of her indefinitely. However, some women in the study were never pregnant and still had male DNA living in them. This led to the postulation that the life of sexual partners in their genetic material also remains in the woman indefinitely, simply by virtue of sexual intercourse.

Experience and common sense also supports Tebow's morality. A woman reacting to the Tebow story in Charisma Magazine wrote: "And going into our 23rd year of marriage I'm so glad that [my husband] waited for me. [It} showed me and my sons how valuable I am to him....I had no competition on our wedding night and he had no baggage from past sexual relationships. There were no old girlfriends that I had to compete with or memories of past sexual escapades. We started with a clean slate."

Other than religious objections and the usual fears of STD's and pregnancy, premarital sex breaks hearts, leaves people feeling used, lowers self-esteem, contributes to depression, to promiscuity, and to cynicism. It also diminishes the special nature of marriage and the uniqueness of the spousal relationship. The body language of the marital embrace has an objective signification, which is meant to say: "I give my whole self to you completely and uniquely." Becoming one flesh with others beforehand distorts that signification and diminishes the union spouses are meant to have. So, as people in the media and elsewhere continue their adolescent ridicule of Tebow, which is really an attempt to mask their own guilt, Tim Tebow is a hero to the many struggling to overcome the pitfalls of modern life. He inspires others to see that a healthy relationship to self, marriage, and God is well worth rejecting the allure of the world, the flesh, and the devil.

Paul Murano teaches philosophy at North Shore Community College and Rivier University; and Adult catechesis at St. Patrick's parish in Nashua. He is host of Beneath the Surface on WCAP radio Mondays 10-11pm, is on the board of Heartbeat Pregnancy Help center in Burlington, and is a singer-songwriter-musician. E-mail Paul at PJDM@aol.com





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Continuing our Focus on Veterans and the Opioid Epidemic

The Massachusetts Senate recently completed the first year of a two-year legislative session by sending to the governor’s desk legislation for increased penalties for trafficking fentanyl, and five bills related to veterans.

To further address the health crisis of opiate abuse in the Commonwealth, the legislature passed House Bill 3798, An Act Relative to the Trafficking of Fentanyl, 39-0. The Commonwealth’s trafficking statute will now include a penalty for trafficking fentanyl, a deadly additive found in heroin and the cause of countless overdoses. Any person found to be bringing a net weight of more than 10 grams into Massachusetts may be punished by a term of imprisonment in state prison for not more than 20 years.

The Senate also passed a number of bills in support of the 385,000 veterans that reside in the Commonwealth and their families. House Bill 1641 known as the “Stolen Valor Act,” was passed unanimously and criminalizes the act of falsely representing a branch of the armed

IN YOUR CORNER WITH SENATOR KATY IVES

services or falsely claiming to be a recipient of a service-related award in order to obtain a tangible benefit. An individual found to commit such an act would be guilty of committing a gross misdemeanor and would be punished by imprisonment in a house of correction for not more than 1 year or by a fine of \$1,000, or both.

In addition, the Senate also passed House Bill 3243 An Act Providing Free Park Access to Purple Heart Recipients, which waives admission fees for access and use of state parks and recreation areas for Purple Heart recipients. The legislature also approved House Bill 1306, An Act Relative to Veterans’ Grave Markers, which creates penalties of not more than \$5,000 for the selling, receiving, retaining or disposal of commemorative grave markers. Related bills, H.3173 and H.1600 penalize the removal of commemorative flag holders for veterans, police and firefighter, and require anyone

convicted of desecrating a gravestone to pay restitution, respectively.

All of the legislation above has been signed by the governor and is now law.

Formal session will resume in January when members will take on a series of pending legislation. Near the top of the list is a public records bill, a version of which was passed by the House on the last day of formal session of 2015.

I filed a bill earlier this year, S.1700, An Act Relative to Obtaining Information, which would incentivize timely compliance with reasonable public records requests and encourage increased government transparency and accountability. I will work to incorporate language from my bill to the Senate’s public records legislation so that public records requests can be honored in a timely manner.

Senator O’Connor Ives can be reached at KATHLEEN.OCNNORIVES@MASENATE.GOV



Want a Pay Raise? Support the Pipeline!

Christine Morabito
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

What we have is a problem of energy inequality.

In terms of energy costs, Massachusetts residents pay the highest prices in the nation - three to four times as much per kilowatt hour for electricity. We are so accustomed to paying this exorbitant amount, that we rarely question it. The fact is: our available energy has failed to meet the rising demand.

The solution is Kinder Morgan’s proposed Northeast Energy Direct Pipeline (NED). The plan calls for approximately 60 miles of pipeline to be constructed in Massachusetts, Connecticut and New Hampshire. The pipeline will deliver clean natural gas, which will also be used to generate electricity. An increased supply means much lower costs. It is estimated that the average New England household will save \$437 per year.

We need energy for our most basic activities of daily living, like refrigeration, cooking, plumbing, lighting, heating and cooling our homes and businesses. Energy also allows us to communicate with the outside world through our computers, fax machines and smartphones, and find enjoyment through our big screen televisions, satellite dishes, and Xboxes.

This domestically obtained natural gas has the ability to make our region energy independent, reducing our need to import dirty fuels like coal and oil, often from foreign sources. That is supposed to be a



good thing.

The pipeline, with its new, green and affordable energy, will attract new businesses and bring an economic boost to our region. A study by the Beacon Hill Institute has determined, “Lower energy cost would translate into investment in manufacturing where the high price of electricity and natural gas has long served as a barrier to growth. Thus, the increased availability of natural gas could sustain and increase the state’s competitive advantage.” An estimated 1,700 new jobs will be created during construction, increasing to 10,000 by 2020. That means increased local revenue for cities and towns for our roads, bridges and schools.

Some pipeline opponents would like you to believe that the project involves some radical, risky new endeavor. Actually, most of us all ready have pipelines that run from the street to our homes. We just never think about them, as they rarely pose a problem.

According to the American Gas As-

sociation, natural gas utilities spend \$19 billion annually on safety measures for the more than 2 million miles of pipelines stretching across the country. The nation’s pipeline network is regulated by the U.S. Department of Transportation’s Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, requiring routine monitoring and inspections. Kinder Morgan claims to exceed the DOT’s requirements, performing inspections “at least 26 times a year by air, vehicle or foot.”

That said, nothing is ever 100 percent safe. Leaks and explosions do occasionally occur, most often as a result of carelessness that sometimes goes unreported. The challenge is educating the public about identifying gas leaks and the importance of calling “811” before digging – even if only planting a tree.

The debate over the pipeline has become highly politicized. We have the vocal, well-funded opposition vs. the silent majority (average ratepayers) who support the

pipeline. Many local politicians are holding a finger to the wind; either avoiding the issue like the third rail, or afraid to publicly support it, even though it means a better quality of life for the majority of their constituents.

As with any new construction project, there is a strong Not in My Backyard (NIMBY) component. However, construction, scheduled to begin in 2017, is expected to have little overall impact and cause minimal disruption. The 36-inch pipeline, when installed, requires only 100 feet on either side, then 50 feet once completed. 85 percent of the land needed is in the public “right of way,” or in the path of existing pipelines, power lines or both.

Some landowners will be affected, and there is the perception that Kinder Morgan could have demonstrated more compassion towards those individuals. There are reports of residents receiving letters warning of legal consequences for failing to allow their properties to be surveyed. In the name of fairness, I will address this issue in a follow-up column.

National Grid Massachusetts has expressed their support for the pipeline due to its ability to alleviate high electricity prices and prepare us for future gas demands. Their statement follows: “National Grid believes in a balanced approach to the region’s energy challenges, including efficiency, new natural gas infrastructure, and renewable energy sources. Additional pipeline capacity is necessary to address

PIPELINE: PAGE 25

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Healthy Body ~ Healthy Mind

Pain Patients To Suffer in Order to Conceal Drug Cartel Activities

Bharani Padmanabhan, MD, PhD
MEDICAL CORRUPTION COLUMNIST

In November's Valley Patriot, I laid out the reason underlying the false government narrative that prescribing pain medicine to patients is the cause of the increasing number of overdose deaths.

I was encouraged that finally after 2 years of drum-beating the false government narrative and concealing the massive impact locally of the Sinaloa drug cartel, the Boston Globe deigned to allow one voice to speak up for people suffering from pain in the form of an opinion piece by Judy Foreman, a Cambridge writer.

Helping patients reduce the pain they suffer from has been a fundamental obligation of physicians from time immemorial. When physicians refuse to do so, they have always been held by other physicians to be a disgrace to the profession.

In Oregon back in 1999, the state medical Board disciplined a Dr. Paul Bilder for giving only Tylenol to a terminally ill cancer patient, among other similar travesties. I dare anyone to claim that was because Purdue Pharma paid off the board.

Slowly over years, despite the ravages of the War On Drugs, patients in pain managed to be heard and get institutional protection.

One strong protection is HCAHPS, the Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems, which is a mandatory survey that hospitals need to complete for each patient they discharge before Medicare will pay them for that stay. HCAHPS requires hospitals to ask patients to rate how well staff cared about the fact they had pain and how well it was treated. If HCAHPS is not completed properly, the hospital's reimbursement is docked by 2%.

So if you have to protect the Sinaloa

drug cartel and blame doctors and pain patients instead, what do you do?

You ask Medicare to waive the requirement to complete the HCAHPS survey, that's what.

And that precisely is the recommendation of the much-lauded Governor's Opioid Addiction Working Group. By seeking a waiver from treating pain in ill patients inside the hospital, we will successfully combat the "Opioid Epidemic" you see. And this way our precious hospitals won't lose that 2% of the money either. A true win-win. Members of the Governor's Opioid Addiction Working Group must have been giddy with joy when they came up with that one.

One member of that group, Dr. Sarah Wakeman, is frequently on local media discussing addiction and pain and is part of MGH's Response to the Opioid Epidemic.

A patient of mine with multiple sclerosis developed large staghorn kidney stones last month and sought help at MGH. She has been on a stable dose of pain medicine for almost 15 years due to her MS, but it wasn't touching the new stone pain.

I was outraged that MGH doctors refused to prescribe her anything to cover her for the significant increase in pain she suffered as a result of the surgical removal of the staghorn stones. I had to step in and write her a prescription for a week's supply of strong pain medicine that her MGH doctors should have.

Behold MGH's Response to the Opioid Epidemic.

Physicians here who refuse to treat pain have nothing to fear from the Massachusetts Board of Registration in Medicine, unlike those in Oregon or California. After all, the Massachusetts Board must also do its part to conceal the impact of the Sinaloa drug cartel.

The Board and the Governor's own le-

THE DOCTOR IS IN!

The Genie is Out of the Bottle on Prescription Drug Prices

Dr. Frank MacMillan, MD
VALLEY PATRIOT MEDICAL COLUMNIST

As a college student in the mid 1980s, I studied and received my bachelor degree in economics prior to attending medical school. Also In the mid 1980s, I took note that one component of the new wave in health care was insurance paid prescription drug coverage. As a young person, I always recalled paying cash for prescriptions. Back in the day, prescription drug options were far fewer, but cost a lot less. During the early days, prescription copayments were one to five dollars. But I knew from studying economics that if you price something close to zero, that demand will increase exponentially. The converse of this has also proven true 30 years later, which is that the seemingly endless demand for prescription drugs has resulted in pricing that is no longer grounded to any rational economic principle. This is a big problem even if you don't believe in medicine, because the economy that we depend upon for goods and services and to pay our wages, is extracting an enormous tax on everyone else to pay for it. The genie is truly out of the bottle, and no one knows how to put him back. Our poisoned politics (pardon the pun) makes solving this problem look rather unlikely, absent truth telling and real leadership, which has been lacking on so many levels.

I think we all get it that the development of new prescription drugs has made advances in health seemingly routine. It costs ridiculous sums of money to develop, test and bring a new drug to market, and we have made real strides in improved health as a result. There is no denying the recent advances in pharmacy and therapeutics have helped us live better and longer than ever imagined. There needs to be some way for drug developers to offset the cost of new drug



Dr. Frank MacMillan, Jr., MD, FACP specializes in Gastroenterology and Liver diseases, is a Fellow of the American College of Gastroenterology and it's Massachusetts Governor. He is Vice President of the Massachusetts Gastroenterology Association. Dr MacMillan is a native of North Andover and practices Gastroenterology in Haverhill at Merrimack Valley Hospital, where he currently serves as the Chief of Medicine. He has also been a member of the North Andover Board of Health since 2007. You can email Dr. Frank at fpmacmillan@comcast.net

development and pay for the necessary safety testing prior to general use. Patent laws allow market exclusivity that gives drug developers time to recoup the costs associated with developing new treatments before they are subjected to competition from generic drug makers. Imagine however what the pricing would be if ordinary people were paying for new treatments with their own dollars. I guarantee that the public would value that new drug differently. Heartburn drugs are a great example. I treat this condition every day, and though some people have serious acid reflux disease, most people with heartburn do not, yet I am frequently asked to prescribe medication that costs over \$400/month (patient pays nominal copay, insurance company covers the balance) for what is essentially a lifestyle complaint. Especially when there is OTC medication that costs \$10/month (out of pocket costs paid for by the patient), ask yourself how much you would pay for a branded medication that is only marginally more effective? Those excess costs get spread among the population by way of health insurance premiums. The insurance companies don't care; they just pass along the costs to everyone. The new hepatitis C drugs are priced at 4/5 the cost of a liver transplant, not what it took to develop the drug. Most people with hepatitis C will never experience liver failure or advanced liver disease, but yet the manufacturer somehow figures that their pricing (\$80,000 for 12 weeks) represents good value. No one can afford to pay that much! Are you kidding me?

One of the new "innovations," is in the realm of generic drugs. For thirty years, plans have incentivized doctors and patients to use generics wherever possible because they generally give good value at lower cost. Generics in theory should not enjoy market exclusivity. For many years, generic drugs were priced in pennies, not dollars. Generic lisinopril, used to control high blood pressure, costs less than \$2 for a month's supply. There are several generic manufacturers that still make

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Auditor Bump: Cities and Towns to Get \$2.76 Million for 2016 Elections

Haverhill and Lawrence to Recive State Money

State Auditor Suzanne Bump notified cities and towns across the Commonwealth that they will get more than \$2.76 million to cover the cost of extra mandated polling hours for the 2016 March presidential primary, and the 2016 September state primary and the November final elections.

The Auditor’s Division of Local Mandates determined in 1983 that a state law requiring municipalities to keep voting places open three extra hours was an unfunded mandate and that the state must pay for the increase in Election Day staffing costs.

“The administration of and participation in elections is the very core of our democracy, and increasing accessibility to polls is crucial to the success of the process,” said Auditor Bump. “However, it is important that we not overlook the impact this type of decision can have on municipal budgets. Placing the financial responsibility on the state is a great compromise to protect cities and towns while also ensuring that people have access to polling locations.”

This year’s five largest reimbursements in the region will be received by: Lynn (\$62,187); Lawrence (\$41,307); Haverhill (\$27,681); Peabody (\$27,234) and Saugus (\$15,480).

On average, increases in the total amount of money certified by DLM for Uniform Polling Hours Costs statewide are on pace with the cost of inflation – roughly two to three percent. Several factors impact the level of funding certified by DLM every two years. These include: salaries for polling location staff and security; changes in the number of election precincts; and fluctuations in population within the municipality.

Every two years, DLM certifies the amount the state must pay cities and towns to implement this state mandated service by requiring communities to document additional Election Day costs. To collect



the cost data, DLM utilizes an electronic certification form that all 351 municipal election officials were required to submit by the end of July. DLM then audited and certified each form and Auditor Bump forwarded a report detailing the costs to the Secretary of State on September 15, 2015. The Secretary of State distributes the money to each community prior to the scheduled elections.

Since 1984, DLM has certified over \$25 million for direct state payments to cities and towns to cover this mandate.

Read the complete list of funding for cities and towns here.

About the Division of Local Mandates: DLM is responsible for determining the local financial impact of proposed or existing state mandates. DLM responds to written request for opinions and cost impact analyses from cities, towns, regional school districts, and educational collaboratives, as well as the General Court and state agencies. Responses take the form of opinion letters and cost determinations. DLM also provides informal telephone consultation when appropriate.

Getting Healthy with Rick Bellanti

Rick Bellanti
FITNESS COLUMNIST

When I was approached to write a monthly wellness column, I knew that my first article was going to be about daily water intake. It’s one of the most important ingredients for your health and wellness and also the easiest to do and keep track of.

Water makes up about 60 percent of our bodyweight and is essential for keeping your body running at an optimal level. Water allows oxygen and essential nutrients to travel throughout your body and will help flush toxins out of vital organs while carrying nutrients to your cells. It keeps you hydrated as well as helping you sustain energy and concentration. There are plenty of studies that suggest that being dehydrated causes fatigue and loss of energy, which will ultimately affect your mood and may even cause headaches.

Many times I’m asked: Can drinking water help me lose weight? Drinking water may help you lose weight (in my opinion) as drinking water throughout the day may prevent you from eating when you are not actually hungry, as sometimes when we are getting hunger pains it’s just the body telling us we need more hydration instead. I also suggest drinking a full 8-10oz glass of water thirty minutes before your meals to help fill you up and eat less.

Another question that I’m asked is: How much water should I drink daily? Most health sources still recommend that

to maintain a healthy lifestyle, eight - 8oz glasses of water daily is sufficient. They do include other fluids you drink in that amount as well such as if you drink coffee, tea, soda, juice as all part of your water intake. Keep in mind though if you are trying to lose weight all of these have added calories as well.

When I started my journey to lose weight and get healthy, it was suggested to me that if you are in a weight loss mode (as I still am) you want to drink much more water daily. Some have even suggested to me to drink half your body weight in water (which seemed impossible for me to do as when I started my weight loss journey I was 415lbs so drinking 200+ ounces of water seemed impossible). Personally, I drink eight 16oz glasses throughout the day (128 ounces).

I know some readers just don’t like plain water, I never did either, but just like anything else it takes time to get used to. Try dressing it up a little with a lemon or a lime wedge. Soon it becomes a habit, and now when I find myself at restaurants, I have no problem ordering water with lemon or a lime wedge in it.

Rick Bellanti is a wellness coach and is on a journey himself to lose 240lbs, and has lost 106lbs since the start of 2015. If you have any questions or comments, please post them to his Getting Healthy with Rick Bellanti Facebook page and once a month he will address a few of the topics here.



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TRACEY’S DOGGIE COLUMN

Pamper Your Pets for the Holidays

TRACEY ZYSK
VALLEY PATRIOT DOGGIE COLUMNIST

Merry Christmas and Happy Hanukah to your pets! Chances are, this holiday season you will be surprising your furry friends with a new toy or two.

Americans are expected to spend more than \$60 billion on their animals this year — a 25 percent increase from five years ago, according to CBS.com. And while the bulk of that is on food and health care, we’re a nation that loves to pamper our pets — whether it’s with treats or higher-end goodies.

The American Pet Products Association says 51 percent of dog owners and 38 percent of cat owners buy their fur-children a gift during the holiday season. And the National Retail Federation estimates people will spend an average of \$28.05 on pets this year.

Locally we have many great places to shop for your pets:

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Plaistow: Stateline Pet Supply
Derry: WoofMeow Family Pet Center
Windham Woof it Down

Another very much appreciated gesture is to make a donation in your pet’s name to a local animal shelter or rescue league. Have a Happy, Safe Holiday Season....

Tracey Zysk, owner of Wiggles & Jiggles Pet Care in North Andover MA is a local pet care professional. She has been featured on local radio, TV and newspapers educating the general public on animal care and animal health & wellness. Tracey is a proud supporter of Police, Fire & Military K9 units and National Award winner of the Platinum PAW award. Tracey may be reached at wigglewalk@comcast.net. Become a fan on Facebook at Wiggles & Jiggles Pet Care



TV TALK WITH BILL CUSHING

HBO’s The Leftovers
One Of TV’s Best Dramas



Bill Cushing
VALLEY PATRIOT TV COLUMNIST

With its imaginative storytelling and top-notch acting, HBO’s The Leftovers went from being a strange, frustrating albeit entertaining show in its first season, to one of the best dramas on television in its second.

The Leftovers was created by Damon Lindelof and Tom Perotta and the first season was based on Perotta’s novel of the same name.

The Leftovers takes place three years after a global event called the “Sudden Departure”, the inexplicable, simultaneous disappearance of 140 million people, 2% of the world’s population, on October 14. Following that event, mainstream religions declined, and a number of cults emerged, most notably the Guilty Remnant. The Guilty Remnant is an organization that was formed after The Sudden Departure, whose members are self-proclaimed to be “Living Reminders.”

The story focuses primarily on Kevin Garvey (Justin Theroux), the Chief of Police in the fictional town of Mapleton, New York. His wife Laurie (Amy Brenneman) has joined the Guilty

Remnant, leaving Kevin and their two children. Nora Durst (Carrie Coon), another resident of the town, lost her husband and two children on October 14th and now works as an insurance agent helping people with their claims for their departed loved ones. Nora’s brother Matt (Christopher Eccleston) also lives in the town with his disabled wife (Janel Maloney).

The show’s first season was a depressing and odd story of a grieving town, but did flash moments of promise with some of the best performances on TV and a season finale that packed quite an impact. The show grew, and improved as the season moved on.

The second season has now moved the main characters to the fictional town of Jarden, Texas; a town that had no departures on October 14th. The town has become a tourist attraction and a place for people looking for answers.

This season, an amazing cast got even better with the addition of Regina King (Southland, American Crime). Her character, Erika, and her mysterious family suffer a “departure” of their own early in the season. That event is one of the main focal points for the 2nd season.

As the season has progressed, the episodes have gotten better and better. In the episode “Lens” an amazing scene

TV TALK: PAGE 28

THANK YOU!!

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ENERGY: FROM PAGE 17

Plymouth and work to bring down high-energy costs in Massachusetts. I am confident that the governor and legislative leaders are concentrated on bringing forward a comprehensive energy package during this session. State Representative Campbell represents Methuen and Haverhill and serves on the Committee on Ways and Means and as the Vice Chair of the Public Safety and Homeland Security Committee. She can be reached at: Linda.Campbell@mahouse.gov/617.722.2340 or at representative.linda.campbell@gmail.com/978.989.0722

PIPELINE: FROM PAGE 21

long term demand for natural gas heating, and to bring additional supply to electricity to moderate exorbitant electricity prices. Customers in New England have been subjected to more than \$7 billion in electricity price increases over the last three winters. A diverse portfolio of solutions is the best way to secure a cleaner, more affordable long-term energy future for all customers.” To truly understand the power of the opposition, one must follow the money. Consider this: Warren Buffett owns tremendous stock in our railroads; rails that, incidentally, transport large amounts of coal and oil. As we reduce our dependence on dirty fuels and opt for cleaner, more affordable natural gas, Buffett and billionaires

like him are seeing a reduction in profits. Hence, the 1 percent have put their wealth, power and influence into the demonization of natural gas. Not a fan of the 1 percent? Can you think of a better way to make billionaires a little poorer and yourself a little richer?



Christine Morabito is a psychiatric nurse, a resident of Haverhill, president of Protect Our Vote New England. You can email Christine christine.morabito@hotmail.com

TEEN TALK WITH ANA DEBERNARDO

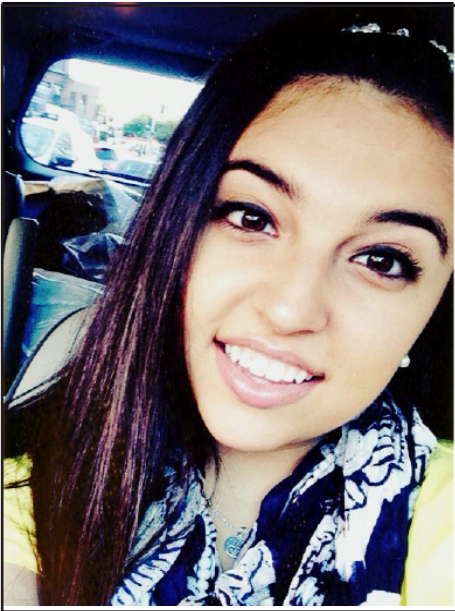
Peace on Earth

The sound of vehicles honking their horns at jaywalkers jolts me from my sleep. The smell of exhaust already suffocates me, barely letting me catch my first breath of the morning. It’s another frigid day in December, and I don’t have a coat or socks, or even shoes without holes. The sky is dark, letting me know that it will probably rain at any moment. But today is the same as every other, and no matter how many warnings the clouds signal, I have no place to go to escape their downpour. I might alternate between busy streets today, hoping that a good person or two might actually care to stop. I wish they understood: It’s not always money I need. Somedays, like today, I just want to feel less invisible...


If today proves to be yet another unsuccessful day on the streets, I might have to find refuge in a homeless shelter. Many people might judge me for being too stubborn to accept help, but I wish they understood: my dignity is the only thing I can still call my own. But in the end, if I refuse food for too long, I would ultimately be relinquishing that too.

People point jeering fingers in my direction, thinking that I might not notice, or even oblivious to the fact that my feelings, although trampled and worn over time, are still capable of being hurt. If it was in my power to get a job, I would. Don’t they know I am ashamed of my situation? This life is all I’ve ever known, yet I continue to be amazed by the embarrassment that each day can bring. The air around me is cold, but every mumbled insult brings a rush of blood through my veins as my increasingly scarlet cheeks warm me, exposing my humiliation. I plot my daily movements and strategies continually on how best to steer clear of violence, but both verbal and physical are often inevitable. I wish they understood: I am not homeless by choice.

Today was not the best day. But neither can I complain. I hold on to the hope that the next days could hold something special in store for me. I acknowledge that fate could have been much less generous to me today, as I ponder the hot cup of coffee I was able to acquire thanks to my daily “earnings” of \$3.74. I wish they understood: the color of the cup bears little importance to people like me. Most people think little of their two or three times a day coffee runs. Being able to stroll into any given shop with a guaran-



tee of coming out drink-in-hand is not a luxury that can be afforded to all. The winter evenings come swiftly, reminding me that it’s time to find my resting place for the night. I am jealous of the sun descending into its habitual abyss, eager to rest before the next day’s routine. As I watch the city around me slowly slip into slumber, I can finally begin to talk with my Companion. My Friend is usually very busy, which is why I wait until nightfall to get His undivided attention. I figure that if no one else is awake to talk to Him, I have a better chance of being heard. I begin by thanking Him for the \$3.74 that I was given today. I ask Him to bless the families of those that took a minute to speak with me while they waited at the bus stop. I even send up a little request for the people that simply looked me in the eye today, a soundless display of compassion exchanged in the process. Most of all, I prepare to wish my Friend a happy birthday because Christmas is coming around the corner. The city around Christmastime is always a hub of bright colors and busy people. As the buildings around me light up with the unconventional holiday colors of red, white, and blue, I am reminded of the hope in solidarity, and I pray also for an end to terrorism. The arctic temperatures somehow evoke the warmth from people’s hearts, but I do not question or bring attention to this seasonal phenomena. All misery seems to fade away, and for a few short weeks, one can truly glimpse the biblical message made manifest; peace on earth and goodwill to men.



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God is Doing Something New, Not a Repeat!

Part 2

IN THE GROOVE with Cindy Annis

Peter Larocque
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

We read in last month’s column that once we become born-again, God places us in Christ making us new! God is not looking to do what he has already done! He even doesn’t want to do the next best thing like I did as a teenager with my new bike. No, God still wants to do a new thing according to Isaiah 43:19.

In this month’s column I want to look at something else God has done that’s new! With the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God ushered in a new covenant establishing our righteousness as a gift!

Because of the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross, we are no longer under the Old Covenant, The Law of Moses, and the 10 Commandments where believers had to earn their righteousness.

According to Matthew 5:17, Jesus Christ himself said, “Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.” When Jesus Christ on the cross said, “It is finished”, the Law of Moses was fulfilled; totally completed. Because of the cross of Christ we have a new covenant with God! In this new covenant, the Bible tells us in Romans 1:17, “The just, [the righteous] shall live by faith.” This faith comes by hearing the word of Christ according to Romans 10:17.

Hebrews 8:7-8 further explains, “For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second.” (8) “For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a New Covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah.” Notice who it was who found fault with the Old Covenant? It was the Lord himself who found fault!

According to Romans 3:20, the law was not designed to justify, [make righteous] anyone, “Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.” The purpose of the law was to bring us to the end of ourselves, showing us our need for a savior, our Lord Jesus Christ!

In the Gospel of John, we read in chapter 1:17, “For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.” Romans 3:24 tells us, “Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:”

Returning to Hebrews 8:12-13, “For I

will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more, (13) In that he saith, A new Covenant he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.”

If God says the Old Covenant has vanished away, then why try to live it? After the death of Jesus Christ on the cross, God unleashed a new thing and that new thing is grace! God’s unearned, undeserved, unmerited favor, where everyone is qualified nobody disqualified! “The Cross frees God to be gracious toward us even when we are undeserving, reason being Jesus bore the punishment for our sins.” (Taken from Pastor Joseph Prince’s Daily Meditate, [devotional] for November 27).

Ephesians 2:7-8 tells us, “That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. (8) For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of ourselves: it is the gift of God:”

There are some who want to live what they call the “balanced walk” which by definition is the mixing of the Old Covenant with the New Covenant. We read in last month’s column Matthew 9:17, where Jesus pointed out the fact that the mixing of the old with the new was not a good thing!

Under the New Covenant of Grace, God no longer remembers our sins, why? Because He did remember them once already and placed them on the body of Jesus Christ on the Cross! 2 Corinthians 5:21 says clearly, “For He [God] made him [Jesus Christ] to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”

Today we live by the Grace of God, where He remembers our sins no more! If God were to remember them again by punishing us now, that would make him an unjust God. Punishing the same sin twice is what we call today in legal terms double jeopardy. This is why trying to live by both covenants leads to a life that is just overwhelmingly frustrating!

Once we understand that all our sins, past, present, and future are forgiven by the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross, we can begin to live the life that Jesus Christ came to make available to us today! A life of victory and abundance!

Now, I am not advocating living a sinful life! The Apostle Paul received the same

LARCOCQUE: PAGE 30

SIMON AND GARFUNKEL
Paul Simon was born on October 13, 1941 in Newark, New Jersey. His full name is Paul Frederic Simon, and he grew up in a Jewish family. When he was 11 years old, he met Art Garfunkel.

Arthur Ira Garfunkel was born on November 5, 1941 in New York City. He is one of three children. Jules Garfunkel is his older brother. His baby brother is named Jerome Garfunkel. Art also grew up in a Jewish family.

When Art was five years old, he started to sing. His father bought him a tape recorder so that he could record himself and play the tape back to improve his voice. When Garfunkel was in the sixth grade, he met Paul Simon. They were both in their school play called “Alice In Wonderland.” After that first performance together, they put together a doo-wop group with three other friends and learned how to harmonize.

In 1956 at age thirteen, Paul Simon wrote his first song called “The Girl For Me.” The duo from 1956 to 1962 called themselves Tom and Jerry. They would often sing at their school dances. In 1957, they recorded “Hey Schoolgirl” for \$25 at a recording studio in Manhattan named Sander’s Studios. Sid Prosen, a promotor liked what he heard and talked to both boys’ parents and signed them to a record label called Big Records. The song went to #49 on the pop charts. The flip side was called “Dancin Wild”.

In 1958, Paul Simon released a solo record under the name True Taylor. The song was called “True or False”. Art Garfunkel was very upset and the incident came up in arguments several times during their career.

In 1964, “The Sound of Silence” was recorded. There are two different versions of this song. The 1964 copy is just a guitar and the voices of Simon and Garfunkel. The 1965 version includes drums. In 1965, a late night disc jockey at WBZ-FM played the remixed version of “The Sound of Silence”. The song was a huge success selling one million copies and going to #1 on the Billboard Hot 100.

In October of 1966, the album “Parsley Sage Rosemary And Thyme” was released



on Columbia Records. During the recording session of the album, they released “A Hazy Shade of Winter”. The song went to #13 on the Hot 100 in November of 1966.

By 1967, people thought Simon and Garfunkel were alienated, weird and poetic. “At The Zoo” was the only song the duo released in 1967. While things were slow, director Mike Nicholas was impressed with the last two albums Simon And Garfunkel had, and asked Clive Davis if he could use their songs in his movie “The Graduate”. The Duo wrote “Mrs. Robinson” for the movie.

In April of 1968, Simon and Garfunkel released the Album “Bookends” on Columbia Records. The recording of this twelve-track album took a year to record. The song “Punky’s Dilemma”, took 50 hours in the studio to record.

The last album the duo would record together was “Bridge over Troubled Water”. The recording process was tough on both Paul Simon and Art Garfunkel. As a result, they split up and started solo careers.

Tune in to Cindy’s Vinyl Vault on AM 980 WCAP every Sunday night 10-midnight, Monday night 11-midnight, and Wednesday night 9-11. You’ll hear the best songs from the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s. You can also make a request by calling in at 978-454-4980. Find us on Facebook and like us at <https://www.facebook.com/cindysvinylvault/>. Until next month, it’s not how old it is, but how great it sounds.



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Palestinian Terror Kills Another American

Jeff Jacoby

VALLEY PATRIOT GUEST COLUMNIST

At last [month's] State Department press briefing, spokesman John Kirby was asked about the murder of Ezra Schwartz, an 18-year-old from Sharon, Mass., slain in Israel a day earlier by a Palestinian gunman who opened fire on the van in which he and several other students were riding.

"I don't have anything additional to say," Kirby began, noting vaguely that "obviously, the Secretary [John Kerry] was deeply saddened to hear of the death and we're obviously concerned by it." AP reporter Matthew Lee pressed for clarification.

Ezra Schwartz, a high school graduate from Massachusetts spending a gap year in Israel, was killed in a terrorist attack on Nov. 19.

"You do think that he was killed in what was a terrorist attack, right?"

Kirby shuffled through his briefing papers and said he wasn't able "to characterize the circumstances."

Lee persisted: "But you don't think it might have happened in some kind of a robbery gone bad or something, do you?"

Just then the spokesman, with relief, found what he was looking for — a prepared statement formally acknowledging that, yes, Schwartz was "murdered in a terrorist attack." Kirby expressed condolences to the young man's family and said the government was "concerned about the five other American citizens" wounded in the same bloodbath.

Lee: "This seems like an awful lot of Americans to be killed or injured."

Kirby: "Well, it's obviously disconcerting. . . . If you're asking me if I could draw a line of causation here, or intent or motive, I can't."

So: Twenty-four hours after an American teen is gunned down during a wave of Palestinian terror attacks, State's mouthpiece can't bring himself to call it "terrorism" until he locates a piece of paper authorizing use of the T-word. As for all those other wounded Americans, the best he can manage is "disconcerting." And the possibility that Palestinian terrorists might have an "intent or motive" to target Americans? No comment.

What Kirby should have said is that Schwartz is far from the first US citizen to die in a Palestinian attack. His murder came just a month after that of another Massachusetts native — retired elementary school principal Richard Lakin, who was fatally stabbed on a bus in Jerusalem. He in turn was killed days after Eitam Henkin, a noted Torah scholar, was slain together with his wife when a Palestinian terror squad shot them at point-blank

range in front of their children.

Americans have been losing their lives to Palestinian terrorism for years. Koby Mandell, who was born and attended grade school in Maryland, was only 13 when he and a friend were stoned to death while hiking in the Judean hills. Former US Navy Seal John Branchizio was one of three American security contractors blown up in Gaza when Palestinian bombers attacked the diplomatic convoy they were guarding. Gail Rubin, a 39-year-old photographer, was taking pictures of birds on an Israeli beach when she was slaughtered by the notorious Arab terrorist Dalal Mughrabi.

At least 138 US citizens have been killed by terrorists loyal to the PLO, Hamas, and Islamic Jihad or incited to murder by Palestinian Authority propaganda. That incitement is not only rabidly anti-Zionist and anti-Semitic. It is also anti-American.

"We are waging a fierce and cruel battle . . . against the leader of world imperialism," raged Jamal Muhaisen, a member of the Fatah Central committee in a televised ceremony in January. "The enemy of the nations [is] the United States of America."

Palestinian terrorists have repeatedly targeted US citizens. In 1985, during a Mediterranean cruise aboard the MS Achille Lauro, a wheelchair-bound Leon Klinghoffer was shot and thrown into the sea by hijackers belonging to the Palestine Liberation Front.

The same savage message comes from Ahmad Bahr, deputy speaker of the Hamas parliament in Gaza. "O Allah, destroy the Americans and their supporters. O Allah, count them one by one and kill them all, without leaving a single one."

Palestinian factions may feud, but they are as one in celebrating the death of US citizens. After a horrific 2006 suicide bombing in a Tel Aviv restaurant, terrorist plotter Abu Nasser rejoiced that a Florida boy, 16-year-old Daniel Wultz, was among the victims. "This is a gift from Allah," he exulted. "American and Zionist — this is the best target combination we can dream of."

Americans sometimes wonder what Palestinians have done with the \$5 billion in US foreign aid they have received since the 1990s. Washington's largesse has achieved not peace, but unrelenting hostility. "We are fighting the Americans and hate them more than [Al Qaeda]," declared a top Fatah official in 2010. That hatred has sent scores of innocents to early graves. Ezra Schwartz, a spirited and much-loved American, was only the latest.

(Republished with permission by Jeff Jacoby).

FROM ISRAEL TO THE VALLEY PATRIOT

Why I am Glad There Are Guns in the Streets... of Israel

Forest Rain

VALLEY PATRIOT ISRAELI COLUMNIST

Israel is under attack. The hate that has been carefully instilled in the Arab population, in Jerusalem, Palestinian Authority controlled areas and throughout the State of Israel is bursting at the seams and individual Arabs, mostly young people, are committing attack after attack.

You have to be taught to hate and, unfortunately, the Arabs have been teaching their children to hate Jews for years. To become a murderer of Jews, even if it means their own death, is the ultimate aspiration. Those are the people who are honored in their society.

Israel is a Jewish State but Arabs live amongst us, everywhere. It is our neighbors, people that work with us, go to the same universities and shop in the same stores that are rising up to kill us. Knife wielding Arab teenagers are stabbing elderly Jews. Others are throwing rocks and Molotov cocktails at Jews driving home with their kids. Arabs are rioting all over the country, attacking police and trying to block main roads, cutting off Jewish freedom of movement.

These are not desperate people attacking "oppressors", they are hopeful people who believe that terrorism will enable them to transform Israel in to Palestine. Not two countries side by side but rather one country instead of the other.

The Israeli government and security forces are doing everything they can to protect the people of Israel. The problem is that the threat is from within and thus it is not possible to prevent all attacks. It is easy to stand in front of an approaching army but what do you do when it is the woman walking next to you who suddenly stabs you?!

For this reason the Israeli police have asked people licensed to carry guns to carry them — everywhere.

It is civilians, just as much as Israeli security forces, who are protecting each other. In one case a man who was stabbed managed to pull out his personal weapon and shoot the terrorist trying to kill him. In other cases, Israelis with (and without) guns have chased down terrorists to stop them from hurting additional people.

When asked about their reaction these heroes, like all our heroes, respond with statements in the vein of "I just did what needed to be done."

In Israel guns are for protecting family and fellow countrymen. The prevailing attitude is that "I am my brother's keeper." Israelis don't wait for the government or the "authorities" to save them. We save



each other.

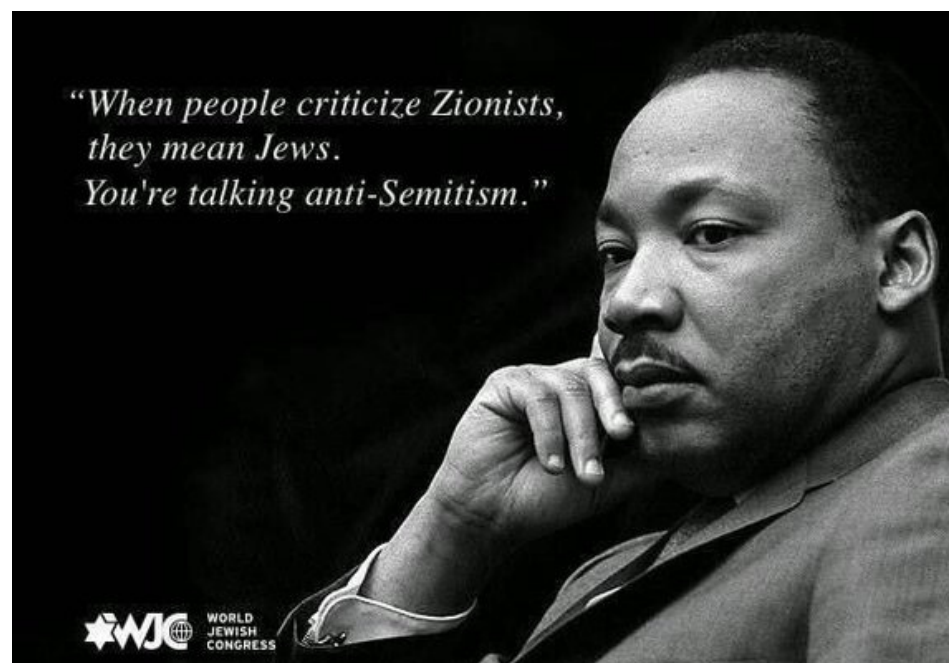
Gun laws in Israel are very strict. Not everyone can get a license and the society does not glorify guns. In fact the prevailing attitude Israelis have about the ease of access to guns in America is that it is dangerous and even ridiculous. Many times I have heard Israelis say: "Those Americans are crazy with their guns and all those kids shooting kids in schools."

Israelis take guns very seriously. They are not toys. Shooting isn't fun. Even hunting is frowned on by most people. Guns are for protecting lives — not attacking your enemy, they are for protecting your family, friends and neighbors.

The female soldier who was stabbed in Tel Aviv had the presence of mind to throw herself on her gun so that the terrorist could not take it. She wasn't about to let her gun be used to kill Jews. She too did "what was expected of her."

The guns in the streets of Israel are what protect me, my family, friends and fellow countrymen from people who are trying to kill us. People who sometimes succeed. I was born in Detroit and have seen people there with guns in the street. The difference is in the people holding the guns and their motivation for having them. That makes all the difference in the world.

I am glad that there are guns in the street in Israel. I wish we didn't need them but since we do, I am glad they are there. To be more accurate, I am grateful for the people who can and will use them when they are needed.



WJC WORLD JEWISH CONGRESS

TV TALK: FROM PAGE 24

DRUG PRICES: FROM PAGE 22

between Erika and Nora is without a doubt one of the best scenes of the year on this or any other show.

But the episode “International Assassins” just might be the finest episode of the entire series thus far. To give too many details of this episode would just ruin it. The series is best experienced without knowing anything more and not having it spoiled by me.

The show is not really a drama about an unexplained occurrence such as “The Sudden Departure” so much as it is about what happens to the people left behind, The Leftovers, and how they deal with such a devastating event.

I really hope that the show isn’t forgotten at awards time. Justin Theroux and Carrie Coon both are very deserving of acting nominations as well as the show being recognized with a Best Drama Series nod.

The show is certain to appear on many critics 10 Best List at the end of the year. It will most certainly be included on mine in next month’s column.

The Leftovers just finished its 2nd season on HBO, but you can catch it On Demand.

Have a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year everyone!

Do you have any questions about TV? Email me at BillsTVTalk@gmail.com. I will answer all of your questions and will feature some of the questions I receive in a future column.

Follow Bill on Twitter @BillsTVTalk and on Facebook at Bills TV Talk for daily up-to-the-minute TV news and discussion.

EDUCATION: FROM PAGE 20

(and nights and weekends, hopefully). . . YES! The implication to that statement is that we should not have a personal life-at all. No matter how hard we work, how early we come in or stay late, we are made to feel that we are not doing enough and what we are doing isn’t good enough.

Speaking of personal lives, teachers do have them. Some have great ones, others not so much. I know of many colleagues who are dealing with devastating personal challenges then have to come to a job that beats them up daily and expects them to eat up their personal time with work.

Why don’t we leave you ask? We can’t. Veteran teachers would never be hired outside our system because we make too much money, yet it’s still not enough. Another school system would rather hire two or three brand new teachers, who are probably going to quit within the first 5 years of their career, than hire one veteran teacher who is damn good at his or her job and will stay because they don’t want to lose their retirement. We can’t go from the public to the private sector because that is exactly what will happen; we’ll lose our retirement.

I don’t know of any teacher who loves their career right now. We are all rattled to the bone and stretched to our limit. I used to love what I did, but it was all stripped away from me because of standardized testing. Thankfully I have a loving, supportive, and fulfilling personal life. I have a wife who loves three wonderful children, a terrific extended family, and me with terrific siblings, nieces and nephews, and even a few grand ones. Without them, my job would most certainly destroy me.



Dani Langevin is a teacher and has a Bachelors in Fine Art and Masters in Education. She has written four young adult novels, one of which is self-published. You can email Dani at DaniBLangevin@aol.com

CARTELS: FROM PAGE 22

gal team have now officially supported a doctor, Barry Levin, who declared under oath that he would never treat pain, for even 3 months, no matter how genuine the patient’s need for pain relief.

Q (By Dr. Padmanabhan): Supposing you have a patient with pain and it takes more than three months to see a pain center, do you give them prescriptions in the meantime to cover their pain?

A (By Dr. Barry Levin): I don’t prescribe chronic pain medication.

Q : Does three months qualify as chronic, Dr. Levin?

A : Yes.

Q : Supposing a patient had a car accident and is in pain and comes to see you, would you continue that patient’s pain prescription until the patient sees a pain center?

A : Would depend on the specifics of their pain. If they are taking a narcotic, then I would not prescribe that medication. (Sworn transcript Jan. 29, 2015)

If only the Governor’s Opioid Addiction Working Group had a Public Service Award, Dr. Barry Levin would win. His loyalty to the pro-drug-cartel government narrative is so total, the government is prepared to ignore that he lied on his license renewal application.


The future has arrived. Enjoy.

Bharani Padmanabhan MD PhD is a neurologist who specializes in MS in the Boston area. scleroplex@gmail.com

money on this drug, even at that price. What is generally not known however, is that the generic manufacturer industry, like most of health care, has been quietly undergoing a dramatic consolidation through mergers and acquisitions, resulting in some medicines having only one generic manufacturer, essentially market exclusivity. It doesn’t take a great leap of faith to understand why this is resulting in monopoly pricing. Because of regulatory barriers, another generic company cannot just decide to enter the market and create downward pressure on pricing through competition. Some have suggested that at least some of the generic manufacturers may be colluding to agree to divide up the world of generic drugs. Small generic manufacturers have also been targeted for purchase by other companies solely to exploit drug pricing where there are few or only one generic manufacturer. The facts are what they are, and I am not ascribing a specific cause, but tell me why, according to the Wall Street Journal, a 500 capsule bottle of doxycycline, a very old antibiotic you might take for Lyme disease or your kid might take to clear their faces of zits, cost \$20 in 2013, but \$1849 in 2014? You could make a similar case for digoxin, colchicine and what seems to be countless other drugs. It’s not just employers footing the bill, all of us do through lower wages and depressed economic growth. Don’t also forget that the government pays for over half of all the prescription drugs sold in the United States via Medicare, Medicaid, the VA and other programs. That government is every one of us who pays taxes.

I would like to propose some bold policy prescription (again, pardon the pun) for fixing this, but it is really hard to take something away once it has been given. That is the problem with putting the genie back into the bottle. Mark my words however, that the political class will not look to the root causes like monopoly consolidation, illegal collusion, free stuff and corrosive expectations, regulatory barriers to entry of new companies or allowing foreign importation. They will predictably default to price controls, which will only create scarcity and shut down real innovation. That’s where Politics 101 meets Economics 101, and the suckers holding the bag will be all of the rest of us.


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NOTEBOOK: FROM PAGE 13

graded sensualism deprives this life of its grace and refinement, the next of its dignity and sanctity. The fact that in Mohammedan law every woman must belong to some man as his absolute property, either as a child, a wife, or a concubine, must delay the final extinction of slavery until the faith of Islam has ceased to be a great power among men. Individual Muslims may show splendid qualities, but the influence of the religion paralyses the social development of those who follow it.

No stronger retrograde force exists in the world. Far from being moribund, Mohammedanism is a militant and proselytizing faith. It has already spread throughout Central Africa, raising fearless warriors at every step; and were it not that Christianity is sheltered in the strong arms of science, the science against which it had vainly struggled, the civilization of modern Europe might fall, as fell the civilization of ancient Rome.”

Sir Winston Churchill; (Source: The River War, first edition, Vol II, pages 248-250 London).

***COAT DRIVE - Donating coats and jackets to American Training’s annual Coat Drive helps them make life matter by keeping our community warm. Last year, more than 100 coats were collected and thus, more than 100 community members were kept warm through the harsh winter. This year, we’re expecting another difficult winter and are hoping to collect even more coats and jackets. All donations will be distributed to those in our community who are in need, through our own programs and Anton’s Coat Drive. Donations can be made now through February 1 at any of these three American Training locations (8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday): 6 Campanelli Drive in Andover, 150 Industrial Avenue in Lowell, and 107 Audubon Road in Wakefield, or by contacting Robin Gazelian at 978-685-2151, ext. 6822. Be a part of the magic, donate today! Find out more at americantraininginc.com/coatdrive2015.

NECC WINTER INTERSESSION - Looking to catch up on college credits over winter break or get ahead? Northern Essex Community College is now registering students for its second annual winter intersession, a series of accelerated credit courses offered online or on campus throughout the

month of January. The intersession is open to NECC students and students from other colleges or universities, and it offers a range of credit general education courses.

In addition to online and on-campus options, there are hybrid courses which combine online and on-campus learning. The flexible mix allows students to attend courses on NECC’s Lawrence Riverwalk Campus or from the comfort of their own home.

Most courses are suitable for a wide range of majors and fulfill core liberal arts requirements at two-year and four-year institutions. This year’s intersession courses will include cultural anthropology, basic algebra, human biology, and public speaking.

Online courses will run January 4 through January 29. On-campus courses will meet for 10 days, January 4 through 15, Monday through Friday, from 9 a.m. to mid-afternoon on NECC’s Lawrence Riverwalk campus. Please see the intersession schedule for more information.

To learn more, please visit www.necc.mass.edu or contact enrollment services at 978-556-3700 or at admissions@necc.mass.edu.

STATE SENATE ACTIONS

The Senate took action on a wide-ranging set of bills last month which honors the valor and contributions of our veterans, establishes penalties for fentanyl drug trafficking, adds privacy protections for social media users, and enhances student physical education.

The meeting, which represents the final formal Senate session until January, also included debate on legislation that would expand solar energy projects in the public and private sectors. Senators took action to increase the metering cap, which allows electric users to capture credits and lower utility bills. More than 12,000 people are employed in the industry in Massachusetts.

“Our comprehensive work in the Senate today honors our veterans, punishes drug traffickers, protects the privacy of social networking users, strengthens the physical education of children, and clears the way for an expansion of solar energy projects,” said Senate Minority Leader Bruce Tarr

(R-Gloucester). “While we have achieved significant progress on a host of issues this term, we have much more to do.”

The Senate also backed a bill that updates the state’s drug trafficking laws to include a penalty for trafficking fentanyl. Although fentanyl is significantly more potent than drugs such as heroin or morphine, under existing law, traffickers can only be charged with the lesser crimes of dispensing. Under the new law, convictions for trafficking could result in up to 20 years in state prison.

Members of the Senate unanimously adopted an amendment offered by Senator Tarr to a bill requiring school districts that offer sexual health education to also include information designed to raise awareness of child exploitation and signs of abuse. Senators also supported a change to the bill authored by Tarr that secures at least 30 days for parents and guardians to review the curriculum before it is offered.

Other bills that were approved by the Senate in the session include:

- S.757 – An act regulating notaries public to protect consumers sets the terms, qualifications, and requirement for notaries and prohibits a notary, who is not an attorney, from; advising clients with regards to immigration issues, real estate closings, or providing legal advice. The bill creates fines for initial and subsequent violations of law up to \$5,000 and up to one year in jail.

- S.2054 – An act relative to social media privacy protection prohibits employers, or schools from requiring a person to disclose a user name or password for personal social media accounts.

- S.2048 – An act relative to healthy youth requires school districts that offer sexual health education to provide content that is medically accurate and age appropriate. Mandates that all schools must adopt a written policy ensuring notification to parents and guarantees an opt out mechanism for them to withdraw a child from the program without penalty.
- S.2047 – An act to promote quality physical education, which includes age appropriate physical activity, fitness and nutrition. The bill updates the requirements that physical education be taught in all public schools including charters.

- H.1641, The Stolen Valor Act criminalizes the practice of falsely representing oneself as military personnel, a veteran or a recipient of specific military honors in order to receive money, property or a tangible benefit. This crime would be punishable by a fine of \$1,000 and imprisonment of not more than one year.
- H.3243, An Act providing free park access to Purple Heart recipients waives entrance or parking fees at state parks, forests, and reservations for recipients of the Purple Heart. Under current law, only disabled veterans or handicapped persons whose vehicles bear distinctive license plates are allowed free access to these public spaces.

The legislature will continue to hold frequent sessions through the end of the year to advance bills that do not require debate or roll call votes in what are often referred to as informal sessions.

STATEMENT OF STATE AUDITOR SUZANNE BUMP ON EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE FOR THE HOMELESS

An April, 2015 report issued by the Office of the State Auditor recommended that the Commonwealth improve information sharing with cities and towns about how much excise tax the Department of Housing and Community Development is paying for the use of hotel and motel rooms as part of its Emergency Assistance program for homeless families.

I commend DHCD, which released its first report this month, for their quick implementation of this recommendation. This new reporting system not only brings

greater transparency to this program, but also gives municipalities the valuable information they need to anticipate revenues and to build their annual budgets.

The report released by the Office of the State Auditor’s Division of Local Mandates (DLM) studied the impacts of the state’s Emergency Assistance housing program and the adoption of the federal McKinney-Vento Act on local government budgets. It found that both programs generated at least \$11.6 million annually in unreimbursed local costs. In addition to these costs, the report also identified that communities were potentially missing out on an estimated \$1.7 million annually in uncollected hotel-motel excise taxes.

In the first quarter of Fiscal Year 2016, DHCD’s new contracting and invoicing procedures have required and verified that \$484,107 in excise revenue was collected for cities and towns participating in the program. This amount is a baseline that helps both DHCD and cities and towns monitor the local financial impacts of its Emergency Assistance program.

I thank DHCD for taking swift action in response to DLM’s recommendations and I look forward to continued collaboration with DHCD and other state agencies to protect cities and towns from unfunded mandates and other unintended financial burdens.

Some Background: In April 2015, the Office of the State Auditor’s Division of Local Mandates released a Municipal Impact Study of Massachusetts Hotel/Motel –Based Homeless Families Shelter Programs. The study followed a 2011 determination made by DLM that adoption of the federal McKinney-Vento Act, which requires cities and towns to provide school transportation for homeless children, represented an unfunded mandate.

METHUEN GETS MASSWORKS GRANT FOR INFRASTRUCTURE

The Commonwealth’s Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development (EOHED) has selected Methuen to receive a \$1,250,000 MassWorks Infrastructure Program Grant. This is a major accomplishment for our city and we appreciate the work that the Baker-Polito administration has put into fostering productive relationships with Massachusetts cities and towns.

Methuen will use the grant for the necessary transportation improvements at the intersection of Pelham St. and Aegean Drive/Danton Drive in Methuen’s Industrial Park, accommodating the new business coming to this area with the assistance of the State’s Economic Assistance Council. The grant also funds the obligatory public safety improvements at this location, which include the installation of a new traffic signal to ameliorate the safety of vehicles and pedestrians.

METHUEN RECEIVES GRANT FROM HUD

The Commonwealth’s Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) has awarded \$25,000 in Planning Assistance Toward Housing (PATH) funds to the City of Methuen. The funds will facilitate Methuen’s re-zoning process of the downtown area. These funds will contribute to the effort to revitalize the downtown by encouraging residential development and boot the restaurant and retail industries in the area. Thank you to the Commonwealth and DHCD for selecting Methuen to receive this grant.

Recycling Grants for Methuen and Haverhill: The Baker-Polito Administration awarded a series of environmental protection grants to municipalities all over the state. Methuen specifically received \$110,000 in funding to help purchase wheeled recycling carts for the city. Haverhill received \$23,000 to help maximize recycling, composting, and waste reduction.

DAYBREAK: FROM PAGE 5

for me.”

DOING SO MUCH WITH SO LITTLE

Asked if legislators could wave a magic wand and give them the funding they needed, Pappalardo says that what they really need is a budget increase of about \$500,000.

Currently the Daybreak is put together from construction trailers. It houses 35 male beds and 12 female beds. The City of Lawrence allows them to put three mattresses on the floor, for a total capacity of 50 people staying at the shelter each night.

“We used to be able to provide vital mental health and substance abuse counseling until the outpatient counseling center had to close in July,” Pappalardo says. “Unfortunately, we are no longer providing the services from The Counseling Center and we have felt the impact on the community with an increase in the homeless population outside or in emergency rooms. The Counseling Center had 20 clinicians providing individual, family and group counseling. Losing this program was a great loss to the community and the individuals accessing the services. So, now the only services they receive are what we can offer from volunteers at the shelter or from other counseling agencies. Other agencies have long waiting lists or individuals don’t have the means of transportation to get there.”

Pappalardo says she would love to

have the local representatives, senators and Lawrence city councilors come down to the shelter and see for themselves the critical need that they serve in the community. “We have seen Diana DiZoglio. She comes and she has been very helpful. We didn’t ask, she just came and asked us what we needed and how she could help.”

“It’s money yes,” adds Andy McMahan. “But, it’s also about the fact that we can’t do much with this structure. Ideally, we really need a building; a real building. We don’t own the land, it’s owned by Bob Gangi, and we pay rent. Ideally, if we had a real building, we may be able to have a couple of apartments for transition; someplace that isn’t dangerous for them. Right now, like with Marcial, most of the rooming houses around here are much more dangerous than it is here.”

“And it’s not just single guys. We have had three kids go to high school out of here. We had a woman celebrate her 79th birthday. This isn’t the place for that. The people you see here are not the image most people have in their heads. The one thing I would like people to come away from this place with is this: Nobody is very far away from ending up here. I’ve seen guys drive in with expensive cars or women who were living in pretty wealthy homes and either a divorce happens or a spouse decides to flee abuse and they come to our door.”

AMERICAN LEGION NEWS

John Lenotte
VALLEY PATRIOT VETERAN COLUMNIST

As the Christmas and New Year’s holidays approach us, let us not forget the men and women in our military, many of whom will not be with their families this season. This is a sacrifice that most cannot imagine unless they have been through it. Ask what you can do to help them and their families, some of whom may be in need at this time of year.

And now that the local elections are behind us, Congress will be back in session for a short time and then back to work in January. There will also be much focus on the Presidential Primaries as the fields get narrowed down approaching the November Presidential Election. Many millions will be spent on advertising. As I have written before and will continue to mention, I don’t pay any attention to the ads. Personally I think many of the ads insult our intelligence as a voting public. And the amounts spent are just plain sickening considering all the people in this country that could be helped by spending money in that direction instead of trying to influence our votes with what is often half-truths.

There continues to be problems with the VA system. An example follows, from a recent press release from The American Legion: American Legion National Commander Dale Barnett lashed out today over continued revelations about paltry punishments issued to Department of Veterans Affairs executives who were found to have manipulated the travel and relocation bonus system to line their pockets with hundreds of thousands of dollars.

“The lack of accountability displayed by VA leadership here is disgusting,” Barnett said. “These corrupt executives didn’t face harsh consequences for their actions. They actually may have improved their economic worth.”

According to the Houston Chronicle, former Philadelphia VA Regional Office Director Diana Rubens will take a \$20,000 pay cut from her salary of over \$180,000 to assume a slightly lesser VA management role in Houston. According to cost-of-living indicators, it takes about \$120,000 a year in Houston to maintain the lifestyle of someone with a \$180,000 annual salary in Philadelphia. “She’s still making out better on the deal,” said



John Lenotte is the recipient of the 2012 Valley Patriot Hero of the Year Award and is Commander – Wilbur M. Comeau Post 4, The American Legion, Haverhill MA; Past Commander – Department of MA. Contact: JohnLDistrict8@verizon.net

Barnett, “even when you don’t include the additional relocation package.

“It boggles the mind to see the level of protection VA employees have from their own wrongdoings when the very veterans they are supposed to be serving slip through the cracks, some of whom will sleep on the streets with empty bellies this Thanksgiving.”

In early November, it was reported in the national news that the Department of Defense was spending millions of dollars to have professional sports teams honor American soldiers. This amounted to \$6.8 million spend since 2012 in contracts with the NFL, MLB and NHL. How sad is this? And I honestly thought they were all being patriotic!

Does all of this make you frustrated? Angry? If so, you need to contact your elected officials and let them know. We vote them into office. They should be addressing our concerns. But they don’t know what those concerns are unless we let them know. And 2016 is a big election year. Let us make our voices be heard!

May God Bless our troops and their families this holiday season.

John Gaffney’s Amazing Life

John Joseph Gaffney, Jr’s amazing life came to an end on November 15, 2015 surrounded by his loving wife of 68 years, Marian Stewart Gaffney, and his seven children. Born March 15, 1926, on 28 Smith Street in Lawrence, Massachusetts to Helen Mulry Gaffney and John Joseph Gaffney. John graduated from Lawrence High School with the Class of 1944 and served in the United States Army Air Force during WWII in the Pacific Theater and with the Japanese Occupational Forces.

After his honorable discharge, he returned to Lawrence and married the love of his life, Marian, on October 4, 1947. He became a successful businessman in the community and in April 1961 founded Gaffney Corporation Contractors, which he ran for the next 54 years. In 2011, John was presented with the Cheverus Award by Cardinal Sean O’Malley, given to recognize Catholics for their service to the Church and God’s people. He was an anonymous philanthropist his entire life.

Of all John’s incredible accomplishments, he was proudest of his family of seven children: Susan Wilkerson and her husband Lance of Seabrook, NH; John and his wife Janet of North Andover; Michael, formerly of Amesbury; Thomas and his wife Candace of Wellesley; Tim and his wife Nina of North Andover; Nancy Rullo, formerly of North Andover; and Marian Terranova and her husband Joe of North Andover. In addition, he leaves 26 grandchil-



John Gaffney of Lawrence

dren: William, Katherine, and Michael Soule; John, Kristen, Matthew, Mark and Meghan Gaffney; Thomas, David and Lauren Gaffney; Timothy, Jeffrey, Patrick, Evan and Max Gaffny; Martha, Ellen and Michael Rullo; Michael, Luke and Mary Terranova; Tristan, Jocelyn, Allana and Shauna Gaffney; and 23 great-grandchildren. He is also survived by his two sisters, Harriet Palmieri and Peggy O’Connell.

His Funeral Mass was celebrated on Thursday, November 19th at St Mary’s Church in Lawrence and was followed by internment at Ridgewood Cemetery, North Andover.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to St. Mary’s Church, 300 Haverhill Street, Lawrence, MA. 01840.

LAROCQUE: FROM PAGE 26

accusation in Romans 6:1, “Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?” Absolutely not! Verse 14 of the same chapter in Romans tells us, “For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.” This means that sin and all its effects will not have dominion in your life when you are under Grace.

I believe that once one truly understands how God took our sins away and remembers them no more, they would want to live a life that glorifies and magnifies God’s grace!

For God to create the world He had to speak, but for God to redeem the world, He had to send His Son to bleed as a man


for our forgiveness and redemption! As we begin to celebrate Christmas, the birth of our Savior, let’s be thankful that God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son so that whosoever believes on Him should not perish but have everlasting life! John 3:16

Knowing that we have a new life in Christ and a New Covenant of grace to live freely without condemnation, we can now celebrate Christmas with a new and greater meaning! Merry Christmas to you all and may you all have a wonderful, safe New Year! Love to all of you, Peter Larocque



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BOOK REVIEW BY SUSAN PIAZZA: GO SET A WATCHMAN

GO SET A WATCHMAN by Harper Lee
Hardcover \$27.99
278 pgs
1 out of 5 Bookmarkers

Reviewing this book has been difficult only because this was the first draft of another book and not a manuscript meant to be published. It was only after Harper’s sister, Alice, who acted as her personal and professional caretaker died (three months before this book was “discovered”) that it was claimed that Harper Lee agreed to allow the book to be published. And, that is after Harper in a public letter stated: “Rest assured as long as I am alive any book purporting to be with my cooperation is a falsehood.”

Confined to an assisted living facility, blind, deaf, and post stroke this 89 year old woman now decides, after Alice’s death, to release her first book, the draft that was rejected by publicist. Really? There is much controversy regarding the publication of this book. This subject of which in itself is an interesting read.

Now to the book. Save your money! If I were not reviewing this book I would never have finished reading it.

There is always a reason why a publisher rejects a book. In this case the reason quickly becomes obvious. The book is slow, at places painfully so. There are many places where I just had no idea what Lee was talking about. I have never marked so many huhs, and question marks in the margins of a book in my life. She switches points of view in the same paragraph more than once.

Much of the book rambles. I am assuming that the publisher had similar thoughts when rejecting this book. It is also understandable why Lee never pursued publishing this book.

Examples of odd word usage: “... I have eleven days of my vacation left, and I wake up with the screamin’ meemies. She laughed at herself: well, it was the longest on record – longer than elephants and nothing to show for it.” Then there were the huh and question mark sections. “The old courthouse stood white in the afternoon glare. A black hound loped down the street in the distance, the monkey puzzles bristled silently on the corners of the square.” Not a clue. Or, “Good morning. You look like pale blue sin, he said.” Not sure what she is referring to. I think you get my point.

For those who don’t know the story it’s about Scout, Jean Louise, who at twenty-six returns to her hometown of Maycomb, Alabama, after several years living in New York. Once home she becomes disturbed because the town she remembered so fondly is not at all the town she returns to. Up north she was surrounded by a variety of opinions and integrated races. When she returns to the south she finds whites and blacks stuck in old stereotypes. Blacks are inferior and it is up to the righteous whites to care for him.

There is a poignant scene between Jean Louise and Calpurnia. Cal, who is black, raised Jean Louise from age two. Scout goes to visit the older woman at the woman’s home and encounters the color issue between them that she had not previously known existed.

Some readers became apoplectic about Atticus being a racist. In this book there are glimpses of that but that was not what he became, he evolved into a different person in the book she eventually wrote, “To Kill A Mockingbird”. The fact that “To Kill A Mockingbird” is so different from “Go Set A Watchman” is a reflection of how Harper grew as a person and as a writer.

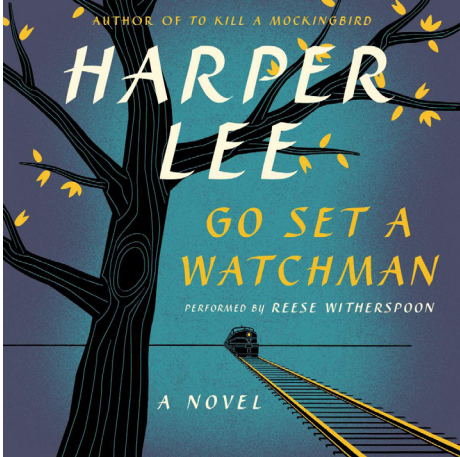
The reader has to wait until mid way through “Go Set A Watchman” to get a glimpse into the racial issues. Some may suggest that the innocent and light beginning is in direct contrast to the black ugly second half of the book.

Another theme that Jean Louise deals with is her relationship with her father. There comes a point in most of our lives when we realize our parents are not infallible. It is often a difficult and disturbing realization. Jean Louise must integrate into her being what she saw and felt as a child with what she now sees and realizes as a woman.

There is the nebulous relationship between her and her “boyfriend”. On again off again is a polite way of characterizing their association. At the end of the book I am no further along in understanding how they connect with each other than Jean Louise is.

The story continuously digresses. There is the section about Jean Louise being pregnant that is a first draft cut if I ever saw one. aquarium

To me this novel is a study in the process of writing. This was a first draft and as any writer knows there is a lifetime between a first draft and a published piece. What one



starts out with sometimes is dramatically different from what one ends up with. I for one would not want a first draft of any of my work released. I go through several versions before the final release. Even this review you are reading has gone through several total rewrites and an editor review.

What I find amazing about “Go Set A Watchman” is that the publisher / editor Ms. Lee submitted this manuscript to had the foresight to see the book that this disjointed piece could become. Harper received the Pulitzer, the Presidential Medal of Freedom, and other literary awards and honors for “To Kill A Mockingbird”, a brilliant book based on the ramblings set in “Go Set A Watchman”.

If you are curious as to how a writer’s piece evolves I would recommend this book otherwise I would say read or reread the work that this book became, “To Kill A Mockingbird”.

AQUARIUM: FROM PAGE 1

Polly had the habit of announcing late visitors to the house, especially Uncle Fred who lived upstairs. As Fred staggered home after another weekend party, Polly would screech “Hello Fred, Hello Fred,” thus confirming to all his exact late arrival.

Every year just before Christmas all of the shells and rocks from the aquarium were removed, laboriously scrubbed and cleaned of all algae and scum by grandpa and left shining and bright to be returned to the tank along with the few remaining fish from the previous year. After Billy and I were sent to bed, a mysterious special tank truck delivered and deposited over 150 new sparkling and lively gold fish into the pool, circling in a sea of frenzied color. What a sight to behold on Christmas morning as two little sleepy boys woke up in the Big House, staring in utter disbelief at this glorious sight!

The Big House has now been silenced and I am the last survivor of that beauti-

ful and extended loving family who tried to preserve the special spirit and meaning of Christmas for their two little boys. Gone from the Earth is brother Billy, all fish in the famous aquarium, even Polly the talking parrot who has flown into the sky, possibly looking for the whereabouts of Uncle Fred. The hour is drawing late, but as I continue to gaze out at the falling snow through slightly misty eyes, I smile and think of those wonderful days at the Big House — where the beautiful gold fish continue to swim and Polly the talking parrot calls out for Fred and all of our loved ones — “Til we meet again, ‘Til we meet again.”

God Bless them and Merry Christmas to all.

Jim Cassidy was commander of the American Legion POST 219, and a member of the Council on Aging and a founding member of the North Andover Tax Payers Association. He was a very wise man and is truly missed!



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